2
TARAREBA
TOKYO
TARAREBA
GIRLS
AKIKO
HIGASHIMURA

Tokyo
TARAREBA
GIRLS
2
AKIKO
HIGASHIMURA

TODAY'S RECOMMENDATIONS

ACT 5 THE DESERTER WOMAN 003

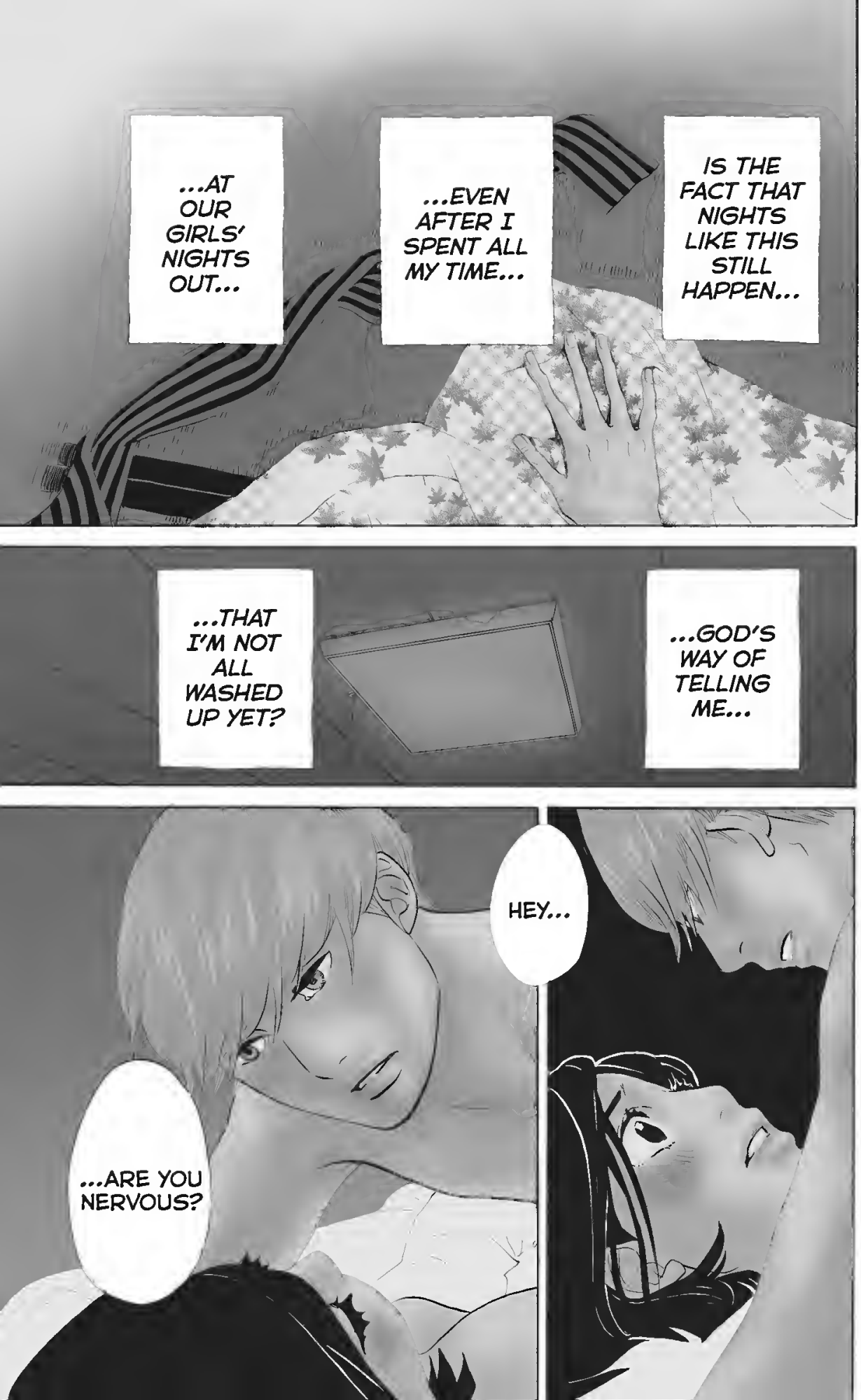
ACT 6 CONVEYOR-BELT SUSHI WOMAN 039

ACT 7 SOUSED MACKEREL WOMAN 079

ACT 8 PUNCH-DRUNK WOMEN 119

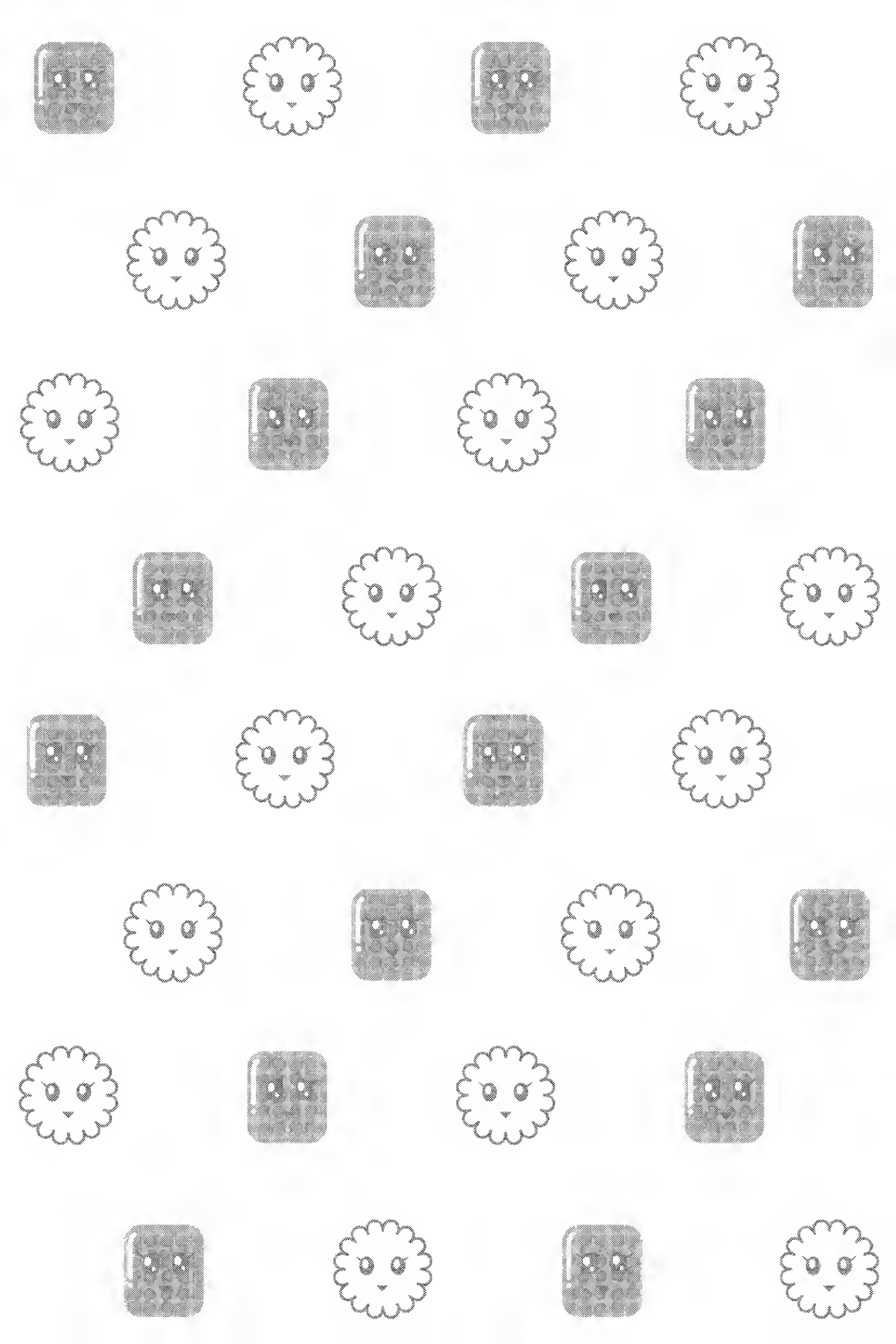
Special Chapter CHOCOLATE IS ALWAYS SWEET TO ME 160

ACT Ex BONUS COMIC 169


...AT OUR GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT...
...EVEN AFTER I SPENT ALL MY TIME...
IS THE FACT THAT NIGHTS LIKE THIS STILL HAPPEN...
...THAT I'M NOT ALL WASHED UP YET?
...GOD'S WAY OF TELLING ME...
HEY...
...ARE YOU NERVOUS?

ACT
5
THE DESERTER WOMAN
TAKARA

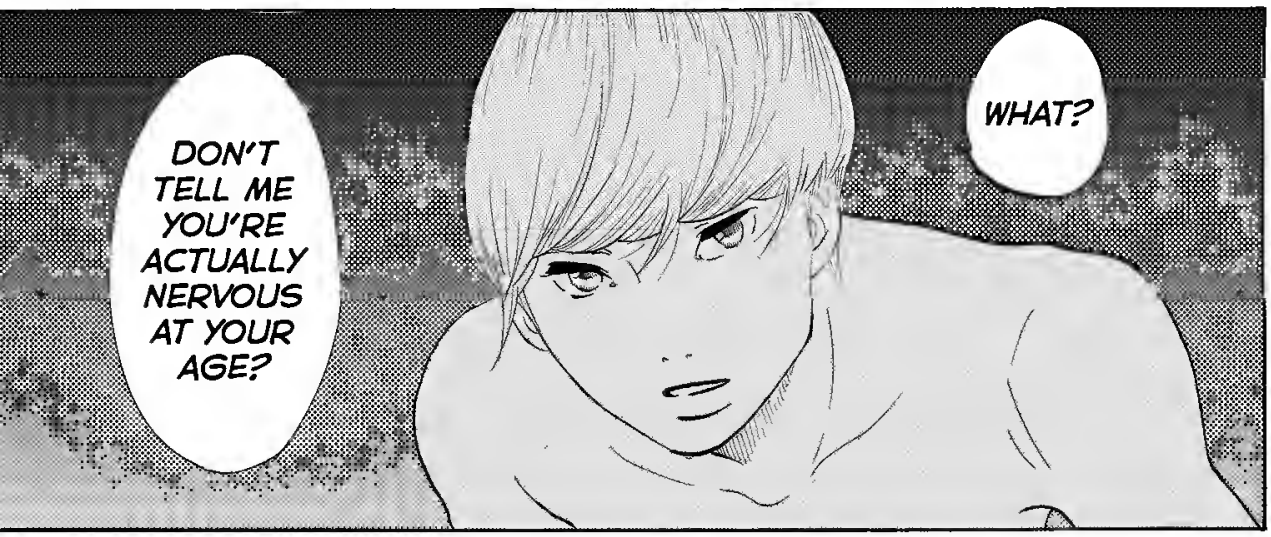
ACT
5
THE DESERTER WOMAN



ガバッ
THUMP
ぱちっ
SNAP
SILENCE

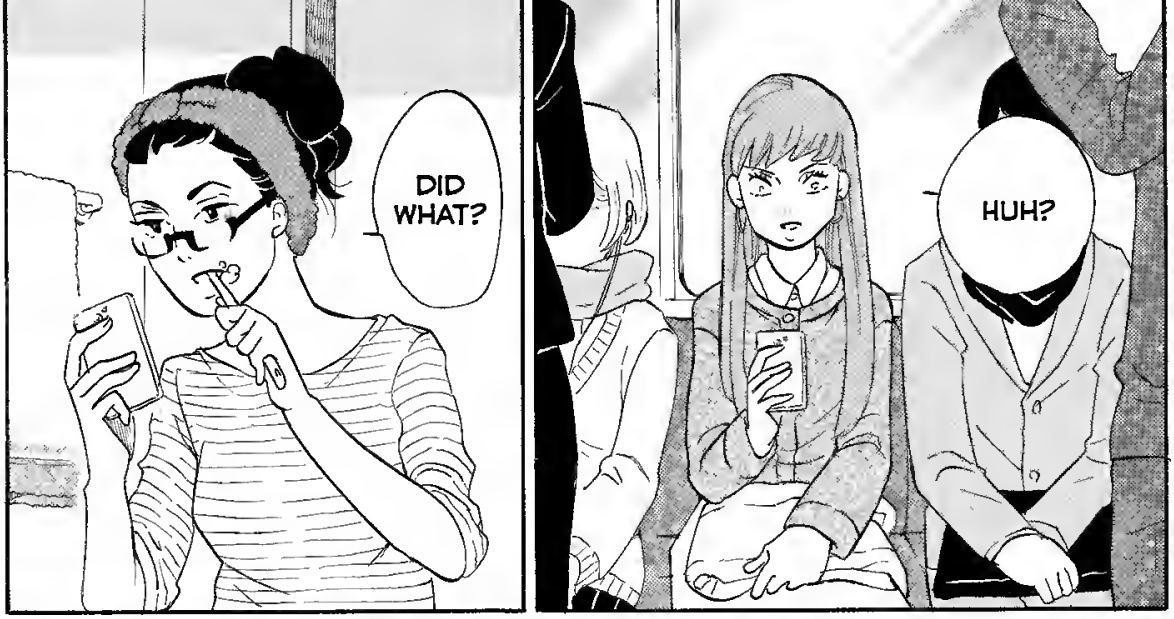
HE'S GONE ...
...
NOT GOOD...
RMB ゴ" RMB ゴ" ゴ" RMB
DAZED
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NEXT.

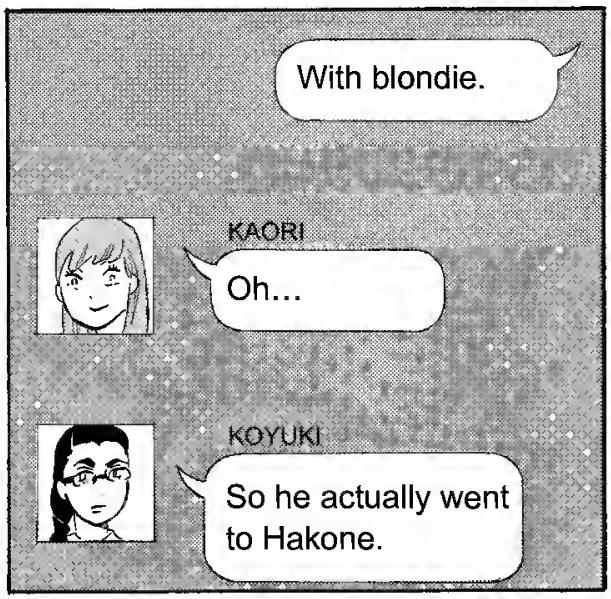
KA-CLUNK
ガタン
KA-CLUNK
ゴトン
KA-CLUNK
ガタン
KA-CLUNK
ゴトン
...
WAS IT...
JUST ...
...A DREAM?

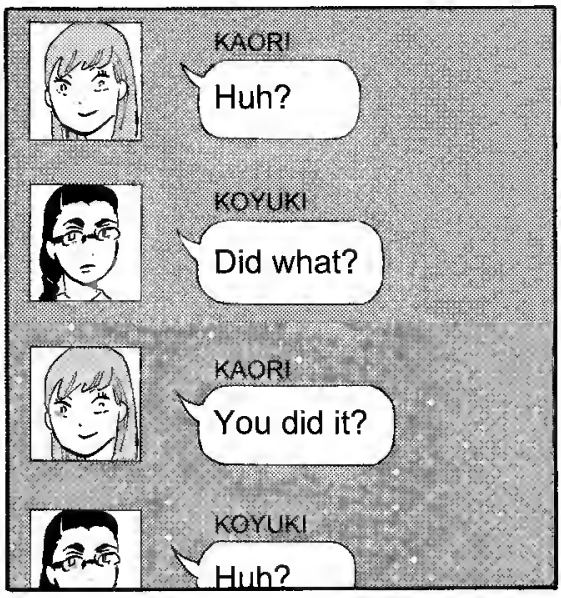

WHAT?
DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE ACTUALLY NERVOUS AT YOUR AGE?

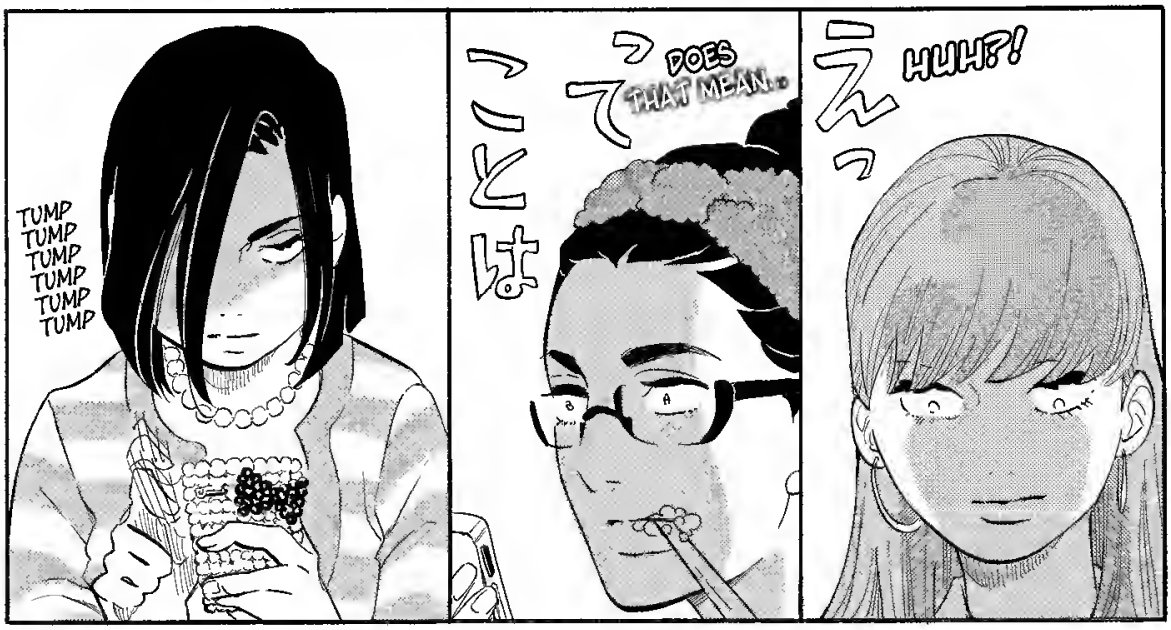
WE ...
YEP ...
WE DEFI-NITELY ...
ABSO-LUTELY ...
MURMUR MURMUR
ザワザワ
WHAM
IT WASN'T A DREEEAAAM !!
FLINCH
ビクッ
FLINCH
ビクッ

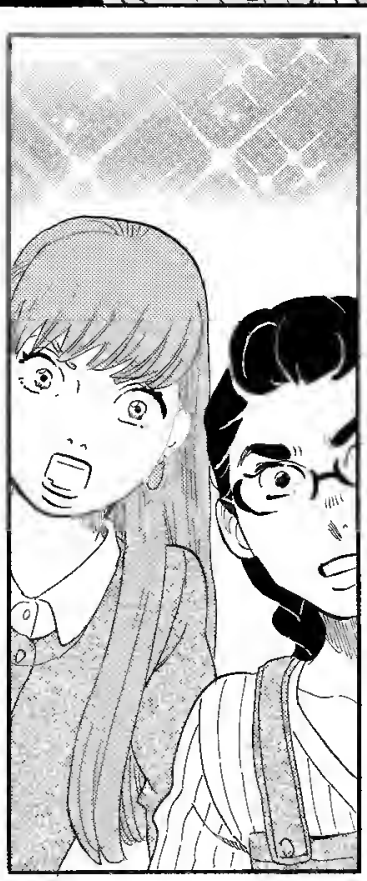
...I SLEPT WITH HIM!!
I WASN'T EVEN DRUNK, BUT WITHOUT A DOUBT...
DID!!
IT!!
TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP
SHWIP
SHAKE ガク
SHAKE ガク
I did it.
I gone and done it.


DID WHAT?
HUH?


With blondie.
KAORI
Oh...
KOYUKI
So he actually went to Hakone.


KAORI
Huh?
KOYUKI
Did what?
KAORI
You did it?
KOYUKI
Huh?


TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP TUMP
ってことは
DOES THAT MEAN...?
えっ
HUH?!



ドドド

I REALLY, REALLY DID IT ...
YOU REALLY, REALLY DID IT, RINKO ?!?!
OH, WHAT'S THE MATTER?
DID YOUR PET TURTLE DIE OR SOME-THING?
NO, STUPID!! LAST NIGHT, THIS CHICK SCREWED A SUPER-HOT YOUNG MODEL!!
And 33-year-old women don't keep pet turtles!
WHOA! KAORI! NOT SO LOUD!
EEEK!
HEH!
THAT'S RIGHT! EVEN SHE HAS SEX SOME-TIMES!! YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT ?!

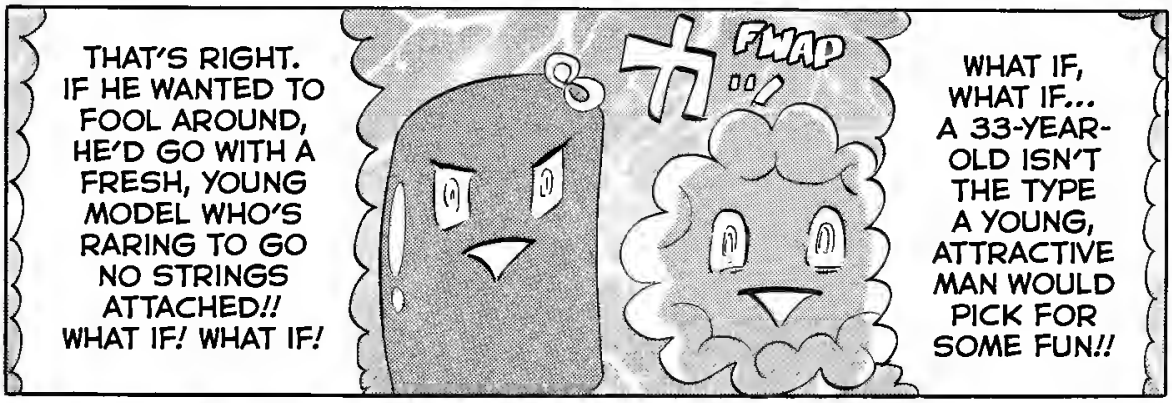
NOW WHAT?
HUH ?!
NOW WHAT?
UH...
SO?!
STOP IT, YOU THREE! WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE ...
WHAT ?!
UHH ...
CRASH
ガシャン
BLUUUSH
ガアアア
ARE YOU GONNA GO OUT WITH HIM?

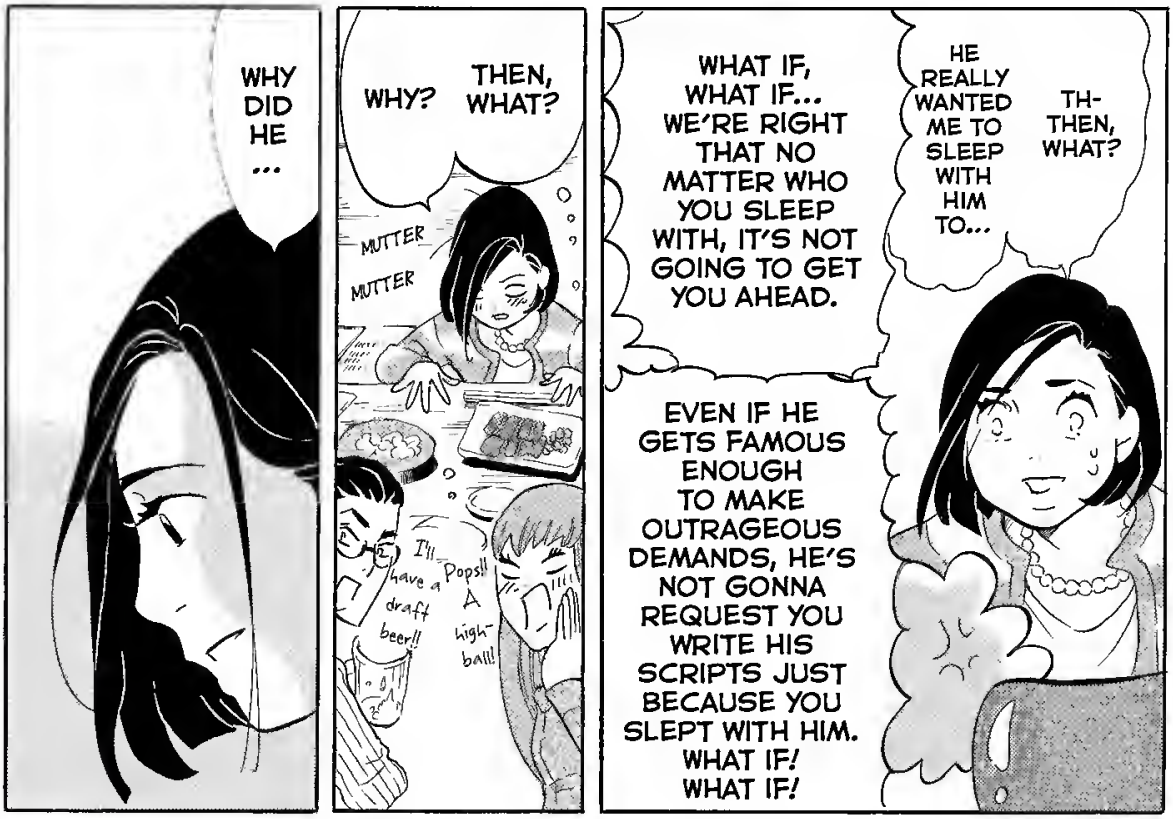
...
CAN'T? SHE...
HUH?
WAIT ...
WAIT ...
...
HUH ?!
...HIM ?
I CAN GO OUT WITH...
HUH ?
DOESN'T THAT MEAN THEY'RE AN ITEM NOW?
ISN'T THAT THE DEAL?
WHEN THAT HAPPENS, DON'T MEN AND WOMEN ...
...GO OUT?
THERE'S BEEN NO WORD FROM HIM SINCE ...
I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO CONTACT HIM...
I- I DON'T KNOW HIS ADDRESS!
WHAT ABOUT OVER EMAIL? OR LINE?
...
WHEN I WOKE UP, HE WAS GONE.
NOT A WORD.
WAIT, DID BLONDIE SAY ANYTHING ABOUT YOU TWO GOING OUT?

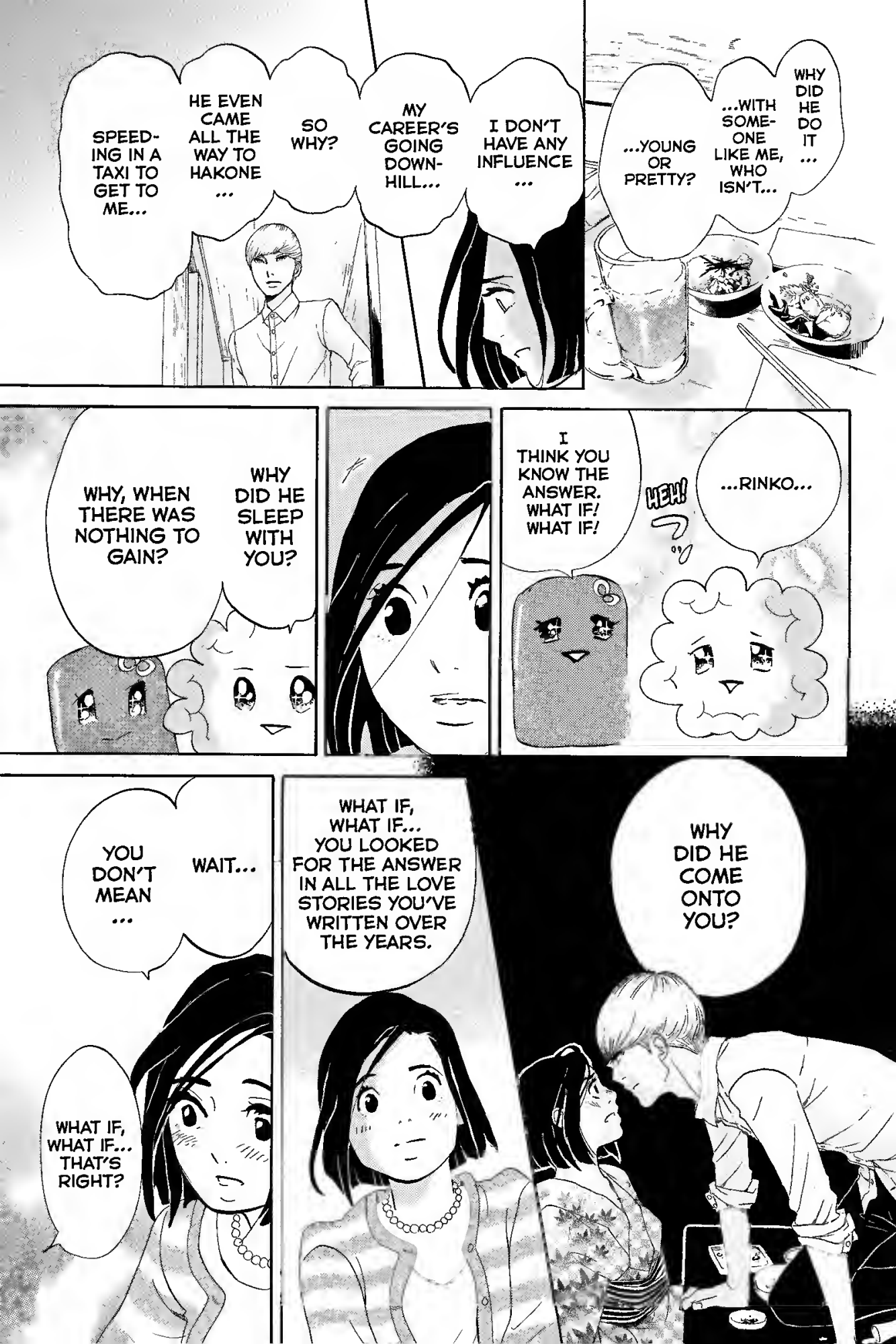
...WAS HIM SAYING I SHOULD ...
...SLEEP WITH HIM...
...TO GET...
...A-HEAD.
...WHAT STARTED THE WHOLE AFFAIR ...
AND FOR THE RECORD ...
HUH?
...
WHO'S THE ONE GETTING AHEAD THERE ?!
WHAT THE HECK?! SHOULDN'T IT BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND ?!
T-TO GET AHEAD ?!
THINK
HUH?!
...
HUH?
HEY...
...NEXT STEP?
WHAT'S MY ACTUAL ...
MY NEXT MOVE.
...SHOULD I DO?
WHAT...

I'VE SPENT SO MUCH OF MY TIME AT THESE GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT...
WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO NOW.
WAS HE JUST TEASING AN OLDER WOMAN?
WAS THAT REALLY JUST UNDER-THE-COVERS NEGOTIAT-ING?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW IF CASES LIKE THIS ARE A "THING" OR NOT.
OR SIMPLY A WHIM?
OR DID HE HAVE SOME FUN AT MY EXPENSE?
SO I DON'T EVEN KNOW HOW TO MOVE MY PIECES.

HE WAS GONE WHEN I WOKE UP, AND HE HASN'T CONTACTED ME SINCE...
NO, REALLY. THAT'S THE ONLY EXPLANATION I CAN THINK OF.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...YOU LISTEN HERE, RINKO.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... HE DIDN'T HAVE FUN AT YOUR EXPENSE!
RINKO!
RISE
JIGGLE
THAT'S RIGHT! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
HUH ?!
WIGGLE
WIGGLE


THAT'S RIGHT. IF HE WANTED TO FOOL AROUND, HE'D GO WITH A FRESH, YOUNG MODEL WHO'S RARING TO GO NO STRINGS ATTACHED!! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
FWAP
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... A 33-YEAR-OLD ISN'T THE TYPE A YOUNG, ATTRACTIVE MAN WOULD PICK FOR SOME FUN!!

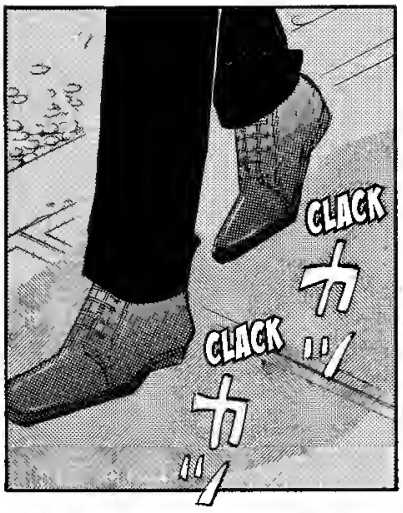

WHY DID HE ...
WHY? THEN, WHAT?
MUTTER MUTTER
I'll have a draft beer!!
Pops!! A high-ball!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WE'RE RIGHT THAT NO MATTER WHO YOU SLEEP WITH, IT'S NOT GOING TO GET YOU AHEAD.
EVEN IF HE GETS FAMOUS ENOUGH TO MAKE OUTRAGEOUS DEMANDS, HE'S NOT GONNA REQUEST YOU WRITE HIS SCRIPTS JUST BECAUSE YOU SLEPT WITH HIM. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
HE REALLY WANTED ME TO SLEEP WITH HIM TO...
TH-THEN, WHAT?


WHY DID HE DO IT ...
...WITH SOMEONE LIKE ME, WHO ISN'T...
...YOUNG OR PRETTY?
I DON'T HAVE ANY INFLUENCE ...
MY CAREER'S GOING DOWNHILL...
SO WHY?
HE EVEN CAME ALL THE WAY TO HAKONE ...
SPEEDING IN A TAXI TO GET TO ME...
...RINKO...
HEH!
I THINK YOU KNOW THE ANSWER. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
WHY DID HE SLEEP WITH YOU?
WHY, WHEN THERE WAS NOTHING TO GAIN?
WHY DID HE COME ONTO YOU?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU LOOKED FOR THE ANSWER IN ALL THE LOVE STORIES YOU'VE WRITTEN OVER THE YEARS.
WAIT...
YOU DON'T MEAN ...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THAT'S RIGHT?

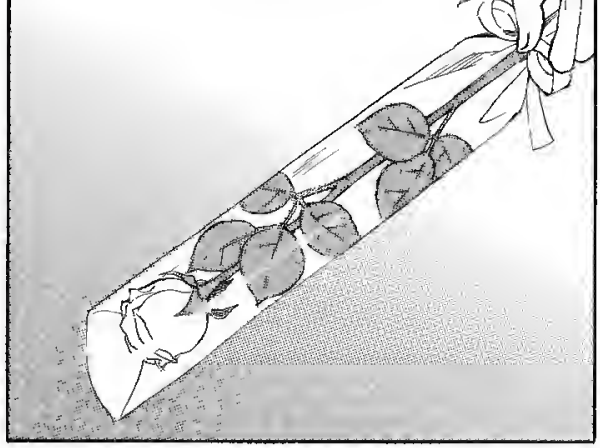
HE LOV--
HE GAVE IN TO TEMPTATION.
...TA- TEMP ...
TION?
HE'D BEEN DRINK- ING, AFTER ALL.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... HE JUST COULDN'T RESIST IT?
LISTEN, RINKO.
...
HUH?
NOTHING MORE, NOTHING LESS.
HE GOT DRUNK, GOT THE URGE, AND HE HAD SEX WITH YOU.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT?
AND HE DRANK A LOT OF SAKE LAST NIGHT. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THAT'S JUST HOW MEN ARE?

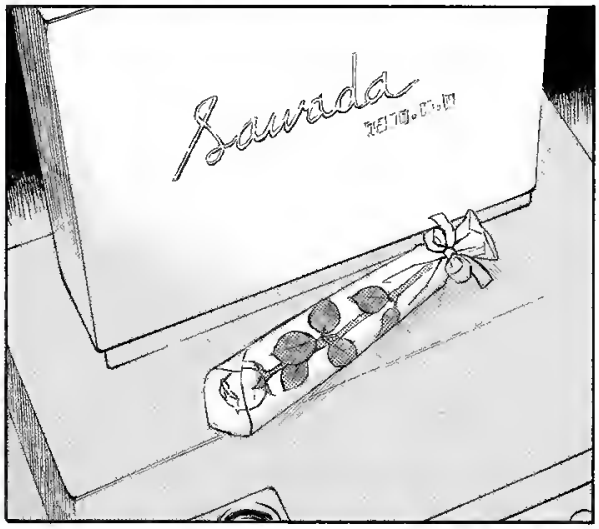
WHAT IF,
WHAT IF...
IT'S JUST
SOMETHING
THAT HAPPENS
WITH MEN?

STOP
ピタ


CLACK
カ
CLACK
カ

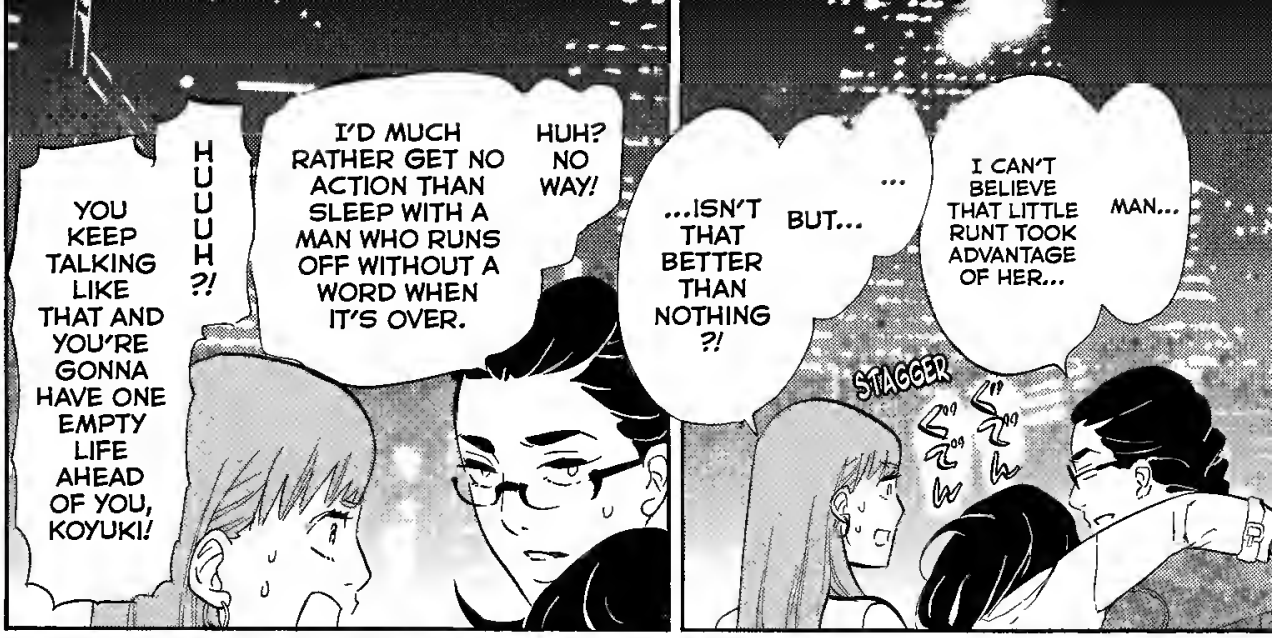
SHHH




Sawada

SORRY I'M LATE.
I'LL BE ON TIME NEXT MONTH.
SEE YOU THEN.
Sawada

WHAT COULD I EVEN SAY...
...AFTER THEY TOLD ME IT WAS JUST A SPUR OF THE MOMENT WHIM?
246
HE NEVER SHOWED UP, DID HE?
HEY, I WASN'T WAITING FOR HIM!! I WASN'T !!
SIGH... SHE DRANK EVEN MORE...
HIC
HE MAY NEVER COME BACK...
...TO NONBEE.
GAH!
YOU MEAN BE-CAUSE IT'D BE AWK-WARD?
THAT WOULD MAKE HIM ABOUT THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.


I'D MUCH RATHER GET NO ACTION THAN SLEEP WITH A MAN WHO RUNS OFF WITHOUT A WORD WHEN IT'S OVER.
HUH? NO WAY!
HUUUH?!
YOU KEEP TALKING LIKE THAT AND YOU'RE GONNA HAVE ONE EMPTY LIFE AHEAD OF YOU, KOYUKI!
I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT LITTLE RUNT TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HER...
MAN...
...
BUT...
...ISN'T THAT BETTER THAN NOTHING?!
STAGGER
STAGGER

SOMETHING HAPPENING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.
OR ARE THERE TIMES WHEN SOMETHING ISN'T BETTER THAN NOTHING?
SIMPLY HAVING SOMEONE, ANYONE, THROW YOU A BONE IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.
ONE MISSPENT NIGHT WITH A HOT GUY IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.

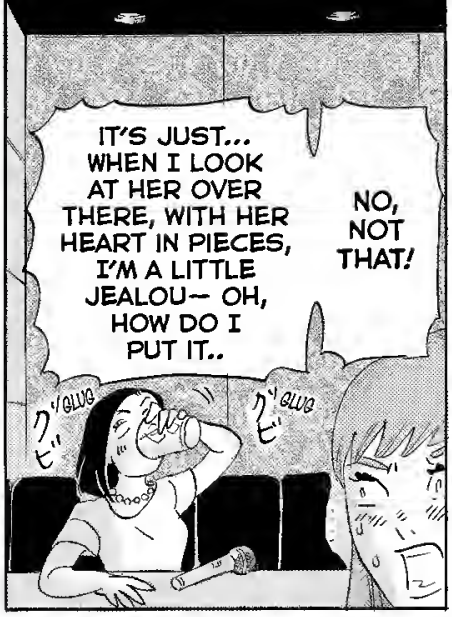
I MAY BE SINGLE AT 33, BUT AT LEAST...
...I'M NOT SINGLE OVER 40. THAT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING.
MAKING A LIVING DOING A JOB I LIKE IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.
LOOKING BETTER THAN THAT WOMAN IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.
BUT NO MATTER HOW MANY "BETTER"S I COUNT UP, IT DOESN'T MAKE MY LIFE ANY LESS MISERABLE.

A SIMPLE WORD.
AN OBVIOUS WORD.
WHEN YOU SAY IT OUT LOUD, IT SOUNDS STALE.
WE KNEW WHAT WE WANTED LONG AGO.
THAT'S RIGHT.
NO MATTER HOW MANY "BETTERS" THERE ARE...
THEY CAN'T ADD UP TO THAT ONE THING.
"LOVE."
UNFOR-TUNATELY, WHAT WE WANT IS PROBABLY ...

MEN CAN DO THAT WITHOUT LOVE...
...AND PLENTY OF WOMEN CAN AS WELL...
I THOUGHT I KNEW THAT.
BUT...
...LAST NIGHT...
...THERE WAS ONE MOMENT... JUST ONE MOMENT...
...WHEN I THOUGHT I HAD FOUND LOVE.
WHAT IF I WERE YOUNGER ...
WHAT IF I WERE YOUNG AND PRETTY ENOUGH TO SUIT HIM...
YEP, I'M STILL JUST A STUPID WOMAN PROPOSING "WHAT-IFS."

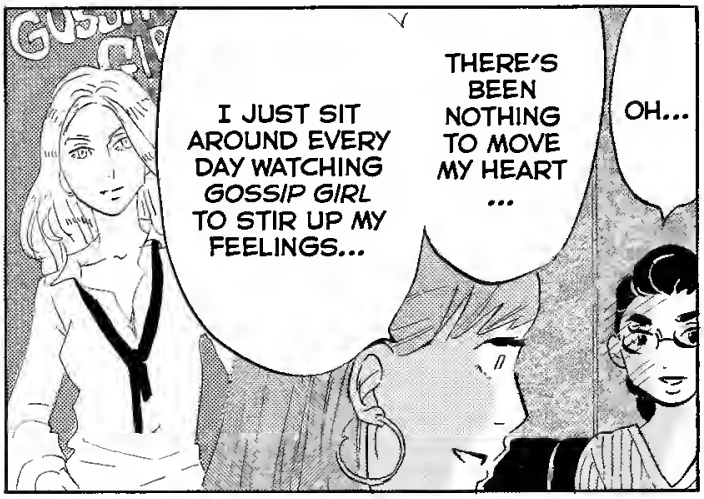
THEY MAY CALL ME—A STUPID WOMAN—
JANG-A-LANG
チャラリ～ン
♫ "Unrequited Love Sake"
BUT I CAN'T FORGET~ THIS LOVE~
MY DAD LOVES TO SING IT...
IT'S SHIRO MIYA'S "UN-REQUITED LOVE SAKE."
WHAT'S THIS? WHO SINGS IT?
IT'S TOUGH. IT'S TOUGH--
AHA-HAHA! OH, YOU!
...BUT I STILL WANT TO SEE YOU WHENEVER I HEAR THE RUMORS...
YOU MAY BE A PLAY-BOY ...
No, I mean it. I mean it.
Oh, it's nothing but lies with you!
Oh, it's nothing but lies with you!
MONKFISH LIVER
IT'S THE UNREQUITED LOVE SAKE I DRINK WHEN IT'S TOO HARD BEING ALONE.
I'M NOT DRINKING THIS SAKE BECAUSE I WANT TO.
ONION
ネギ

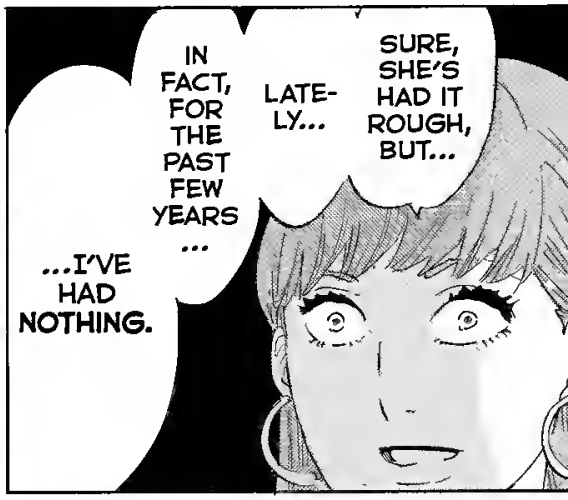
INTOXI-
CATING~
REGRET~
SEEPS~
IT SOUNDS LIKE THEY'RE REFERRING TO US, SPECIFICALLY.
酔うほど未練が
INTOXICATING REGRET SEEPS
身にしみるのよ
INTO MY SKIN
TO~ DA~ AY~
OH NO.
THESE LYRICS ARE HITTING ME PRETTY HARD.
荒れた
TODAY
生活の
IN THIS
今日この頃は
ROUGH LIFE
JINGLE-
JANGLE-
JINGLE
じっ STARE
DOES THAT MEAN WE'RE FINALLY REACHING THAT AGE?
...
I KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO "CRY QUIETLY INTO MY GLASS OF MEMORIES."
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO "WANT TO SEE YOU SO BAD I TREMBLE," BUT...
DITTO.
...THE LYRICS OF THESE OLD BALLADS SPEAK TO ME A LOT MORE THAN MODERN J-POP.
YOU KNOW ...
HIC
BLUB BLUB
I MEAN, WHY ELSE WOULD HE SLEEP WITH HER?
BUT MAYBE HE'S INTO MILFS!!
HE'S A PERFORMER. A MODEL.
THERE'S NOTHING SHE CAN DO.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
...
WHADDYA THINK RINKO'S GONNA DO?


IT'S JUST... WHEN I LOOK AT HER OVER THERE, WITH HER HEART IN PIECES, I'M A LITTLE JEALOU— OH, HOW DO I PUT IT..
NO, NOT THAT!
GLUG
GLUG

HUH ?!
BE-CAUSE SHE SLEPT WITH A CELEB-RITY?!
MAYBE, BUT I'M ACTUALLY STARTING TO GET A LITTLE JEALOUS.
THUP

DON'T YOU REMEMBER HOW MR. OSUGI USED TO SAY MEN IN THE EN-TERTAINMENT INDUSTRY TREAT WOMEN LIKE DISPOSABLE TISSUES?
WELL, I MEAN, COME ON...


I JUST SIT AROUND EVERY DAY WATCHING GOSSIP GIRL TO STIR UP MY FEELINGS...
THERE'S BEEN NOTHING TO MOVE MY HEART ...
OH...


...I'VE HAD NOTHING.
IN FACT, FOR THE PAST FEW YEARS ...
LATE-LY...
SURE, SHE'S HAD IT ROUGH, BUT...

I WANT THE KIND OF LOVE THAT FEELS LIKE YOUR HEART'S TEARING TO BITS! THE KIND OF LOVE THAT MAKES YOU THINK YOU COULD JUST DIE!
I WANT LOVE!
NO WAY!
ALL RIGHT, WHY DON'T WE MAKE THIS BALLAD DAY?

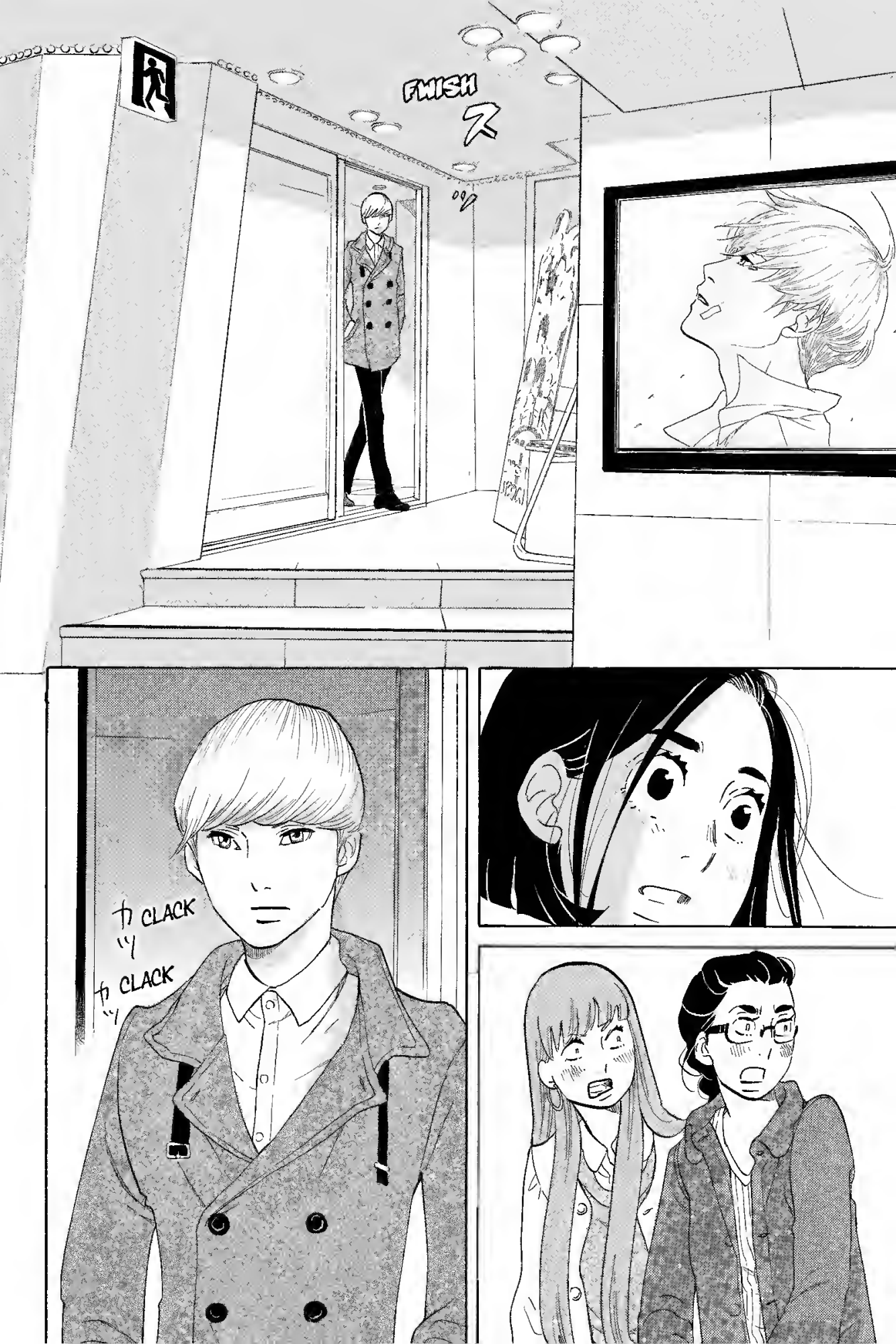
AT THIS AGE, I DON'T WANT TO GO THROUGH ANYTHING PAINFUL.
SO, IT'S BETTER JUST TO BE ALONE.

HUH?!
...PERSONALLY, I'D RATHER NOTHING HAPPEN THAN END UP LIKE THAT.
MUNCH
MUNCH

♪あまぎ～ ごおおおおえぇ～
OVER~ MOUNT AMAGI~
TWITCH びくっ
…
HUH?!
酒処
PUB
…
LOOKS LIKE I WAS A LITTLE LATE.
SORRY! ALL THE CUSTOMERS LEFT EARLY TODAY!
SO I WAS THINKING OF CLOSING UP EARLY!
THE GIRLS EVEN WENT OUT FOR KARAOKE!
OH.
THEN THEY WERE HERE?
SURE THEY WERE!
TH-THEY WERE DRINKING LIKE IT WAS A PARTY NIGHT!
THUNK ガラ
HEY! MISTER !!
HUH ?!
YOU'RE STILL HERE, YAMA?!
Were you in the bathroom?!

HUH ...
DID SHE MENTION THAT?
IF SHE WAS A VIRGIN...
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO NOW?!
YARGH!
STOP THAT, YAMA!!
I HEAR ...
...YOU LAID YOUR GRUBBY FINGERS ON THAT...UH... KOYUKI'S FRIEND! THE ONE WITH THE BOB!
I'M JUST GOING TO POP IN FOR A SECOND.
HUH ?!
YOU'RE GOING TO SEE THEM?
The place called "Pasela" right around the corner!
WHERE DID THEY GO FOR KARA-OKE?
YAMA!! WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN A MAN AND A WOMAN IS BETWEEN THE TWO OF THEM!
RIGHT, POPS ?!
...YOU'D BETTER DO THE RIGHT THING AND MARRY HER!!
SHE'S IN YOUR HANDS, BLONDIE!
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTU-ALLY LIKES THAT DRUNK OLD MAID...
THERE ARE SOME WEIRD PEOPLE IN THIS WORLD...
HE'S GONNA DO THE RIGHT THING AND TAKE THAT BOB-CUT LADY FOR HIS OWN ...
POPS!! THAT GUY JUST SHOWED SOME REAL BALLS!
HE LEFT ...
STEP STEP
スタスタ
手打ちそば

KARAOKE PASELA
カラオケ ペセラ
WHAM
バン
I'M BUYIN' TONIGHT!!
URP!
HUH? ARE YOU SURE?
TALK ABOUT LUCKY!
This week's karaoke streaming ranking...
Number three!!
HMM?
TWITCH
ピク
BOOM
BABOOM
WHASH THISH SHONG CALLED AGAIN? I'VE HEARD IT BEFORE...
WHRRRRR
ウィーン


FWISH
カ CLACK
〃
カ CLACK
〃

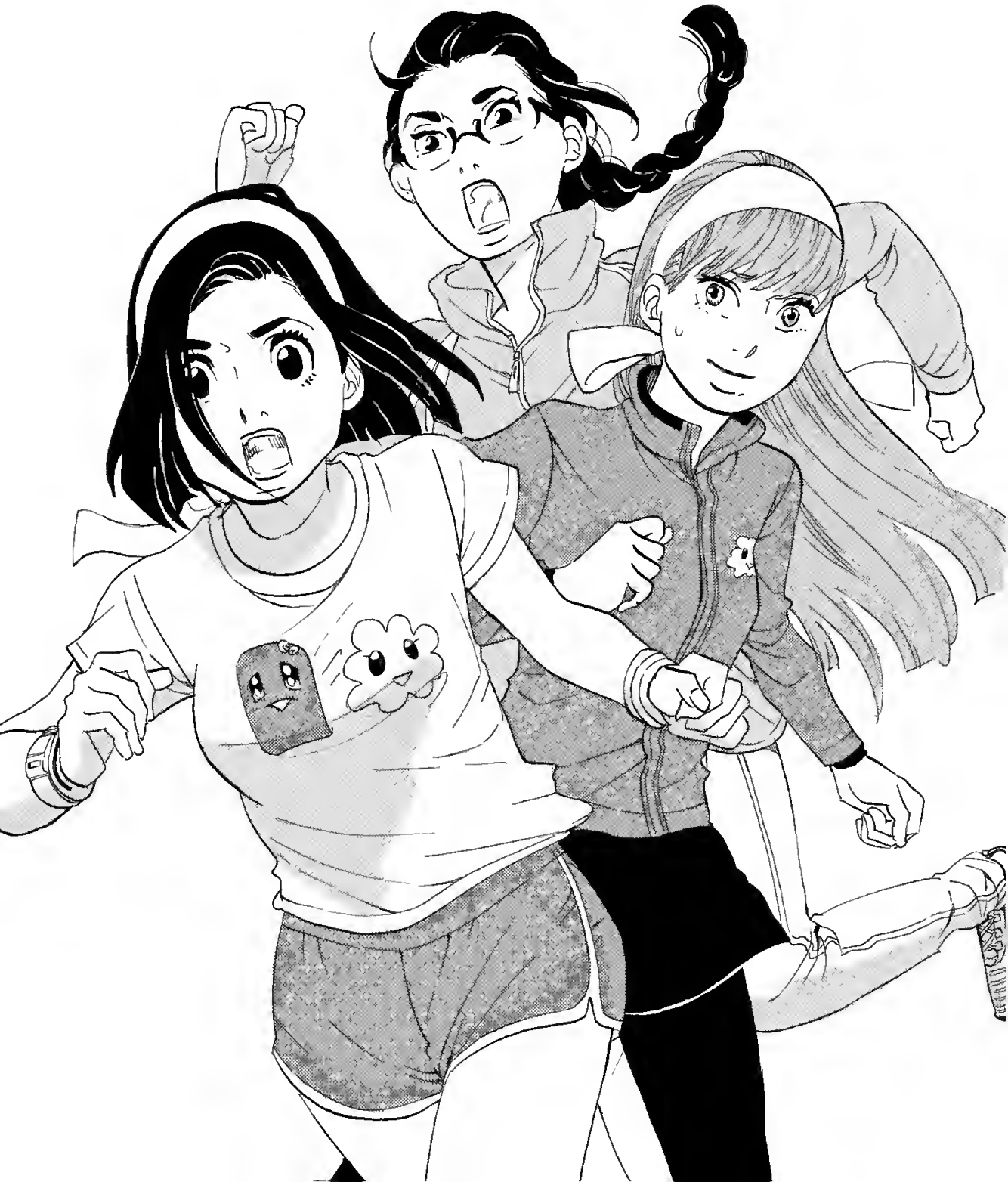
FRON
R... RINKO ... Is this ...?
WHA ...
I APOLOGIZE FOR LEAVING WITHOUT SAYING ANYTHING THIS MORNING.
I REMEMBERED SOME URGENT BUSINESS.
HOW DID YOU KNOW ...
...WE WERE ...
POPS TOLD ME.
THERE WAS SOMETHING...
...I JUST HAD TO TELL YOU.
HUH?!
LISTEN ...
ABOUT LAST NIGHT...

DON'T GO BLABBING ABOUT IT TO PEOPLE THE VERY NEXT DAY!
WHENEVER ANYTHING HAPPENS, IT'S RIGHT TO ONE OF YOUR "GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT."
YOU AND THE REST OF YOUR GIRLFRIENDS WHO HAVE NOTHING BETTER TO DO GET TOGETHER AND YAK ALL NIGHT.
YOU MUST'VE HAD A BLAST GOSSIPING ABOUT ME, RIGHT?
ABOUT HOW YOU SLEPT WITH ME.
THIS IS THE PROBLEM WITH YOUR TYPE.

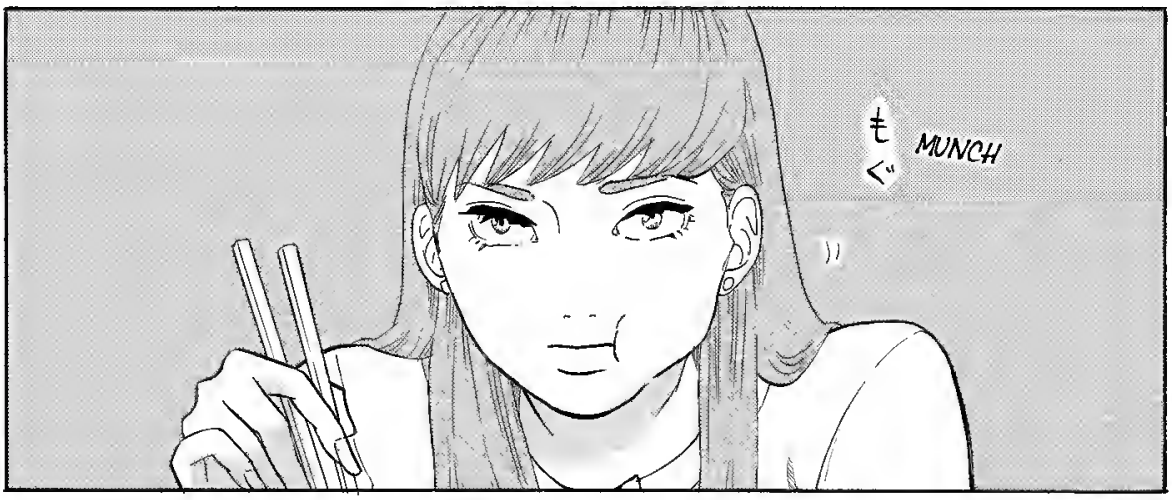
YOU'RE THE LOWEST OF THE LOW.
NOT ONLY DID I NOT KNOW MY NEXT MOVE...
TURN
くるっ
TMP TMP TMP
スタスタスタ
WE'VE RETREATED TO OUR OWN PRIVATE SANCTUARY IN THAT BAR FOR SO LONG...
DOOR
ドアー

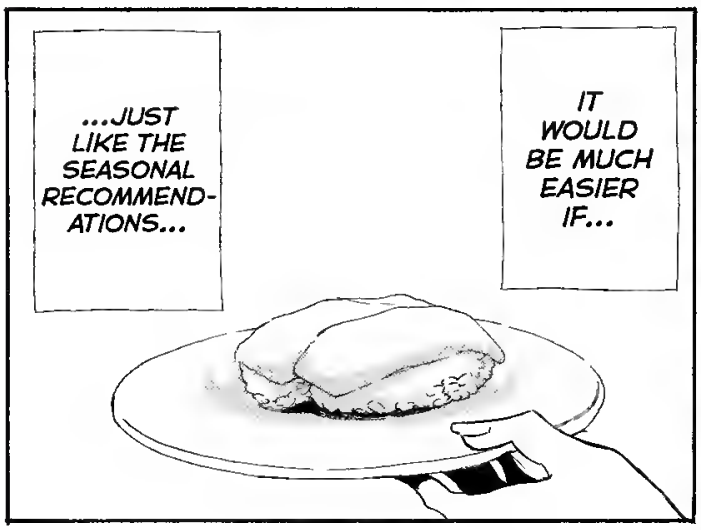
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BLAM
BOOM
WE FORGOT THE RULES OF THE BATTLE-FIELD.
SCARED OF GETTING INJURED.
SCARED OF FALLING IN LOVE.
MY LEGS ARE SHAKING SO BAD I CAN'T MOVE.
I'M SCARED OF GETTING HURT.
WE MAY NO LONGER BE ABLE TO FIGHT.

ACT 6 CONVEYOR-BELT SUSHI WOMAN



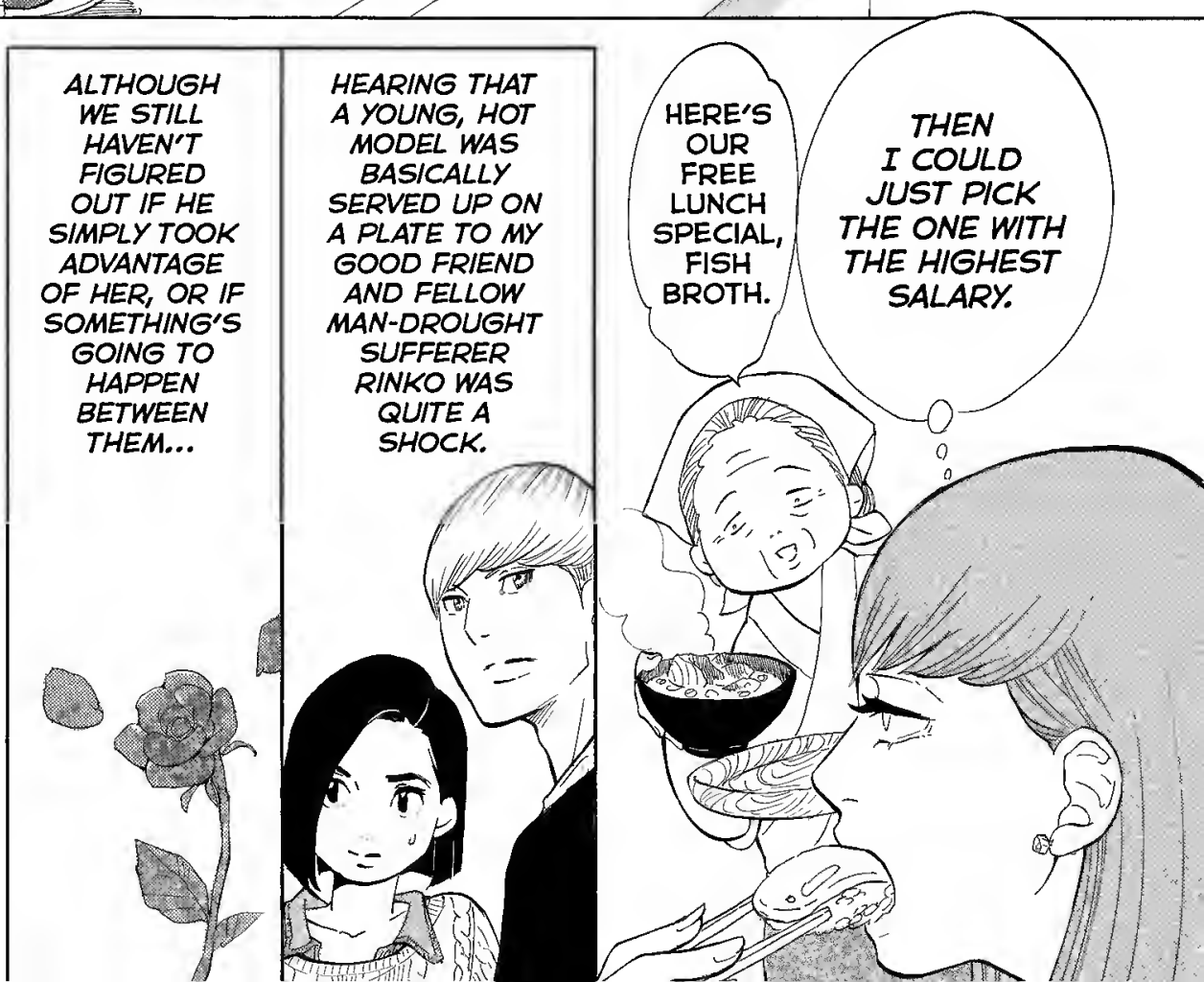
WHRRRRR
ウィーン……
IT'S ALREADY BEEN TEN YEARS SINCE I STARTED COMPLAINING ABOUT NEVER MEETING ANY MEN...

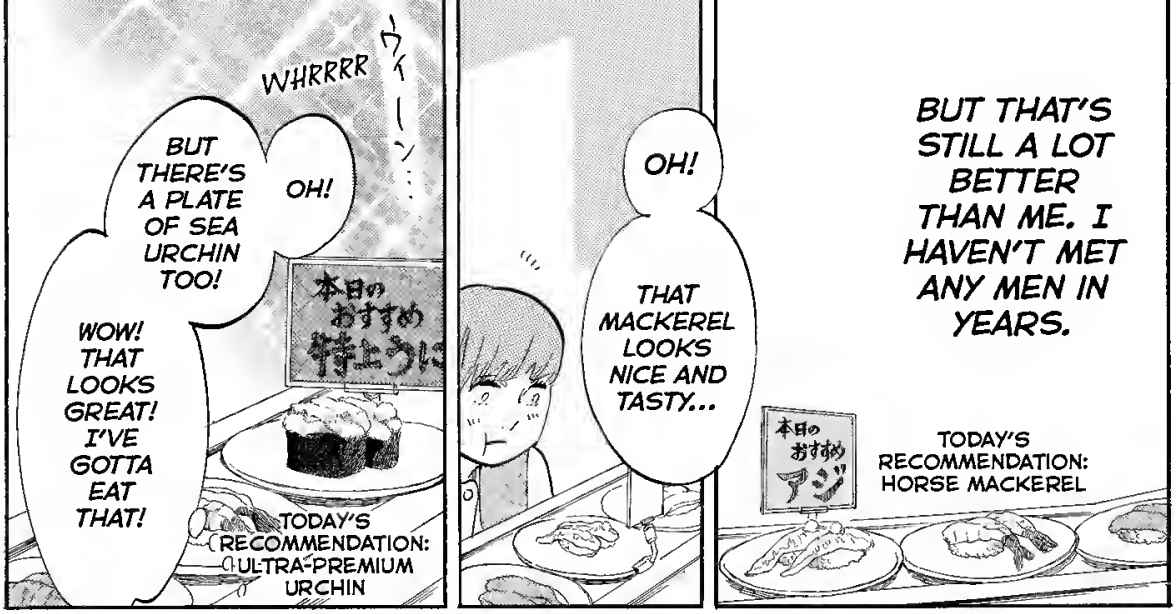

もぐ
MUNCH

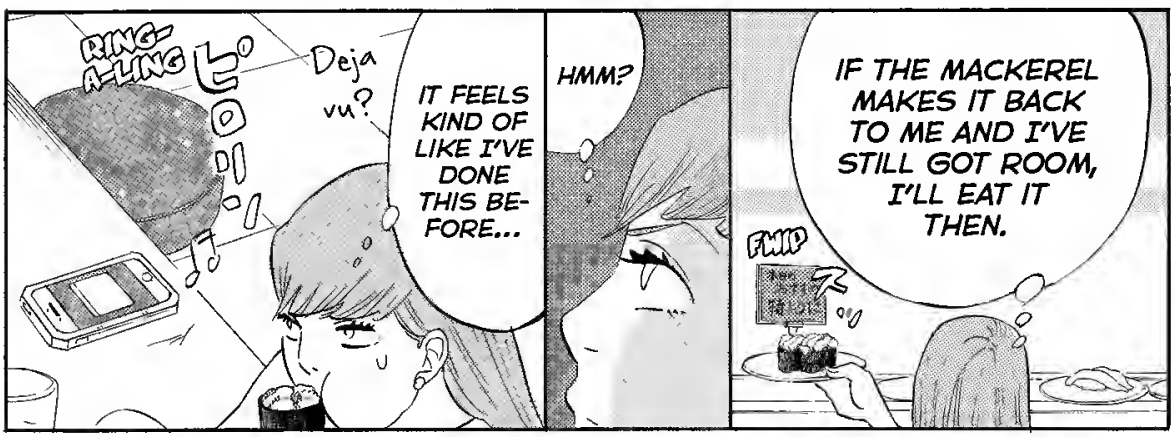

...JUST LIKE THE SEASONAL RECOMMEND-ATIONS...
IT WOULD BE MUCH EASIER IF...

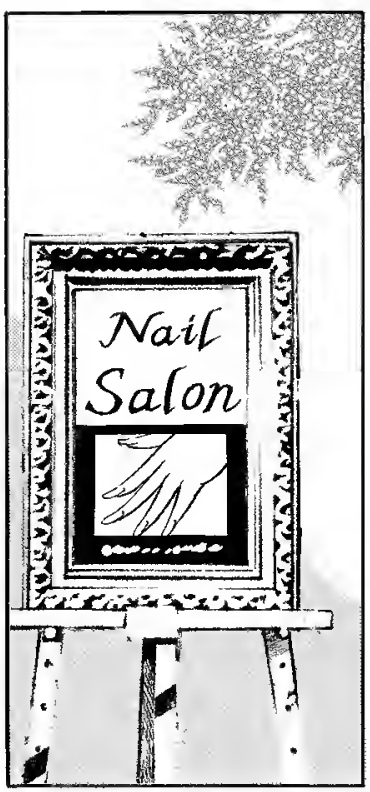
¥400
わし
GRAB
RECOM-MENDED

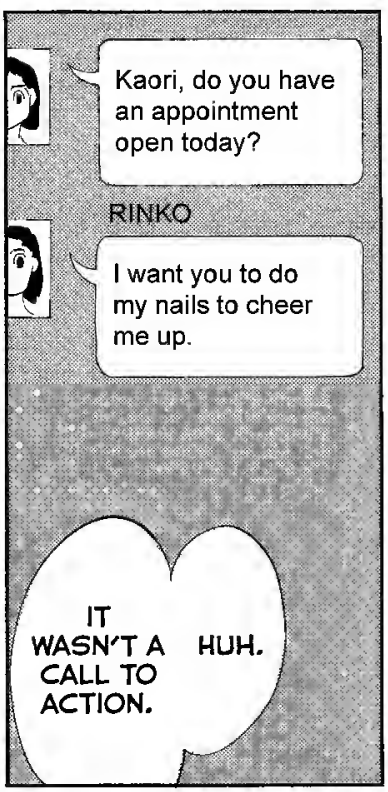
...A GOOD MAN WOULD BE SERVED UP TO ME ON A PLATE.
RECOMMENDED: CIVIL SERVANT
RECOMMENDED: WORLD-CLASS BUSINESSMAN
RECOMMENDED: TOKYO U GRAD!
RECOMMENDED: PRO ATHLETE

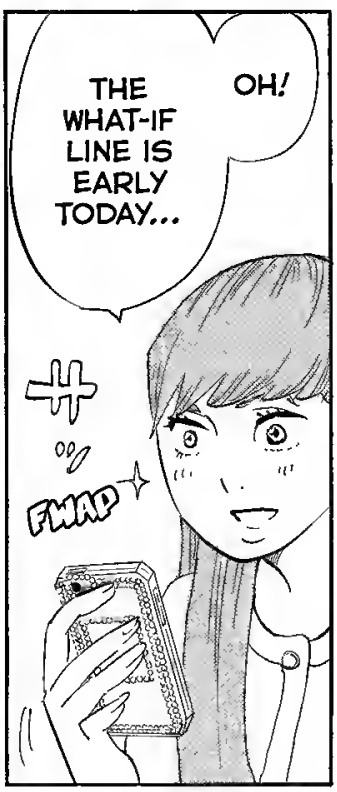

THEN I COULD JUST PICK THE ONE WITH THE HIGHEST SALARY.
HERE'S OUR FREE LUNCH SPECIAL, FISH BROTH.
HEARING THAT A YOUNG, HOT MODEL WAS BASICALLY SERVED UP ON A PLATE TO MY GOOD FRIEND AND FELLOW MAN-DROUGHT SUFFERER RINKO WAS QUITE A SHOCK.
ALTHOUGH WE STILL HAVEN'T FIGURED OUT IF HE SIMPLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF HER, OR IF SOMETHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN BETWEEN THEM...

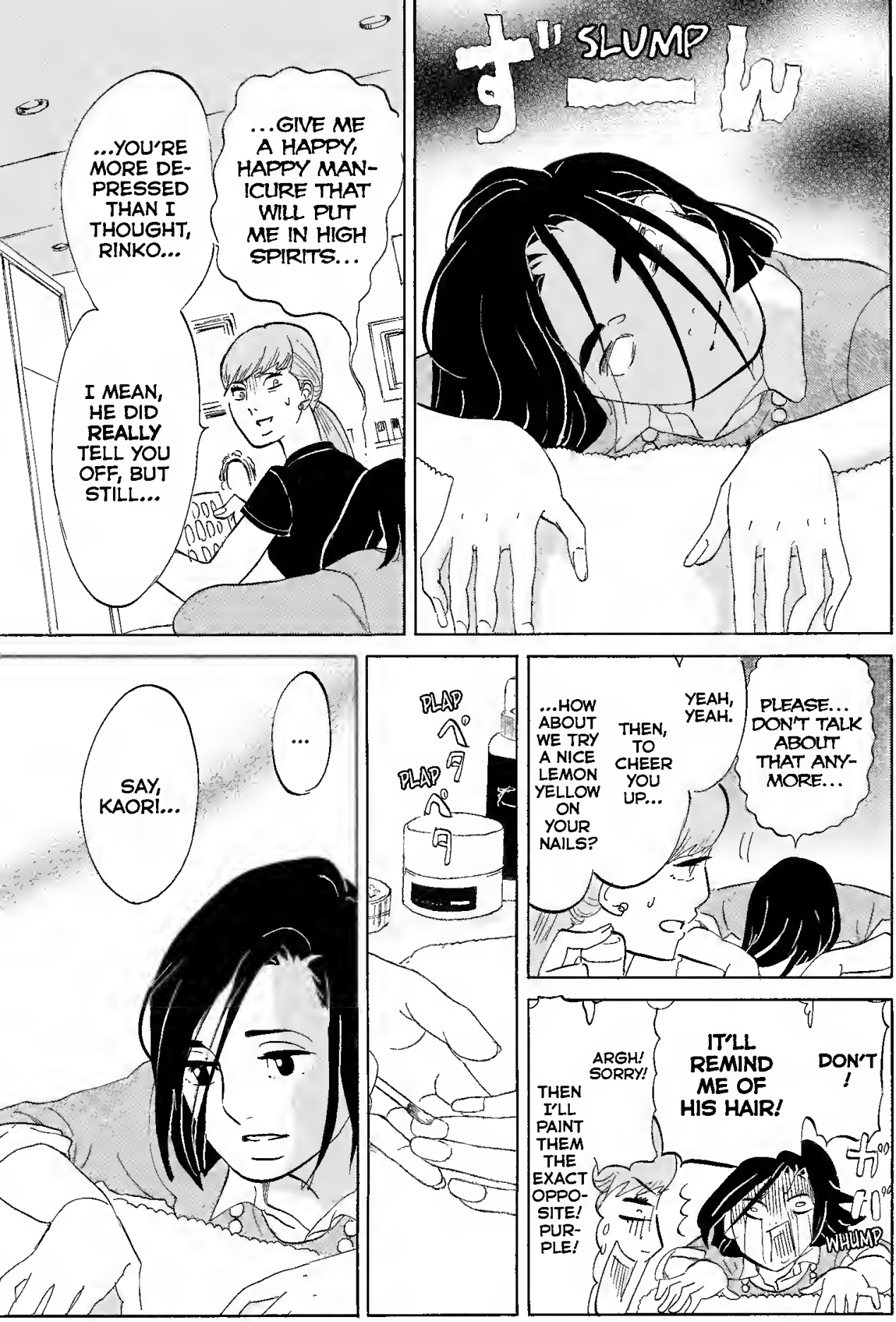

WHRRRR
ウィーン…
BUT THERE'S A PLATE OF SEA URCHIN TOO!
OH!
WOW! THAT LOOKS GREAT! I'VE GOTTA EAT THAT!
本日のおすすめ特上うに
TODAY'S RECOMMENDATION: ULTRA-PREMIUM URCHIN
OH!
THAT MACKEREL LOOKS NICE AND TASTY...
BUT THAT'S STILL A LOT BETTER THAN ME. I HAVEN'T MET ANY MEN IN YEARS.
本日のおすすめアジ
TODAY'S RECOMMENDATION: HORSE MACKEREL


RING-A-LING
ヒロ
Deja vu?
IT FEELS KIND OF LIKE I'VE DONE THIS BE-FORE...
HMM?
IF THE MACKEREL MAKES IT BACK TO ME AND I'VE STILL GOT ROOM, I'LL EAT IT THEN.
FWIP

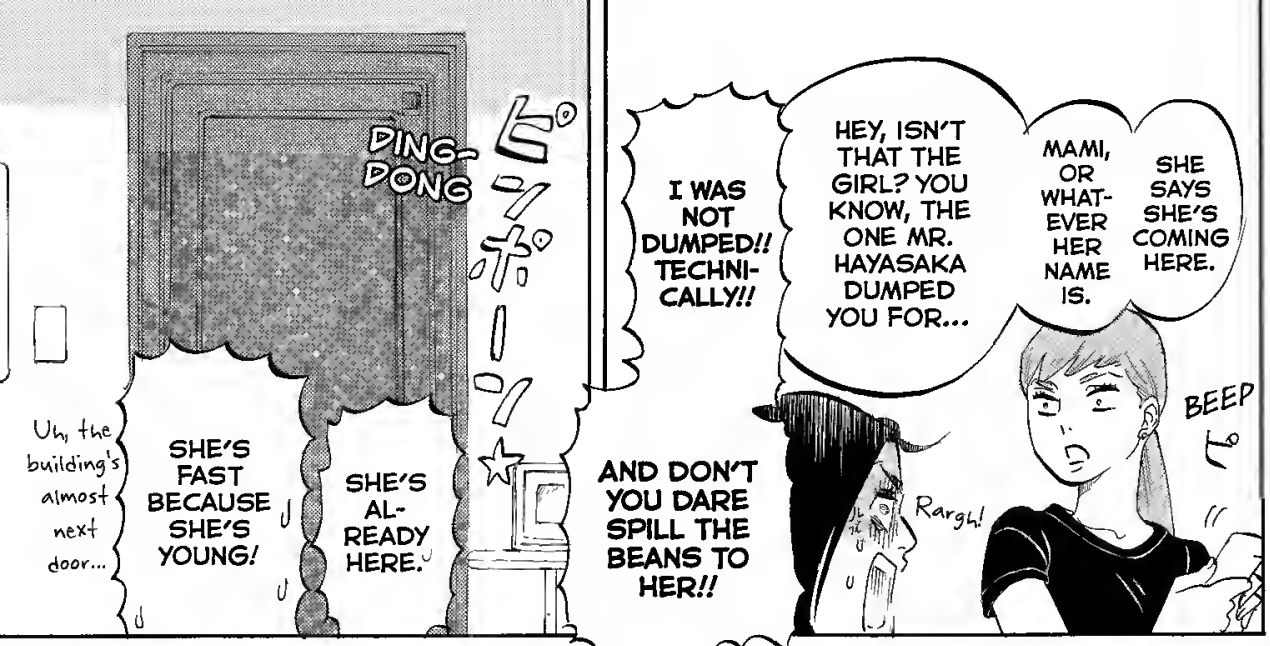

Nail Salon

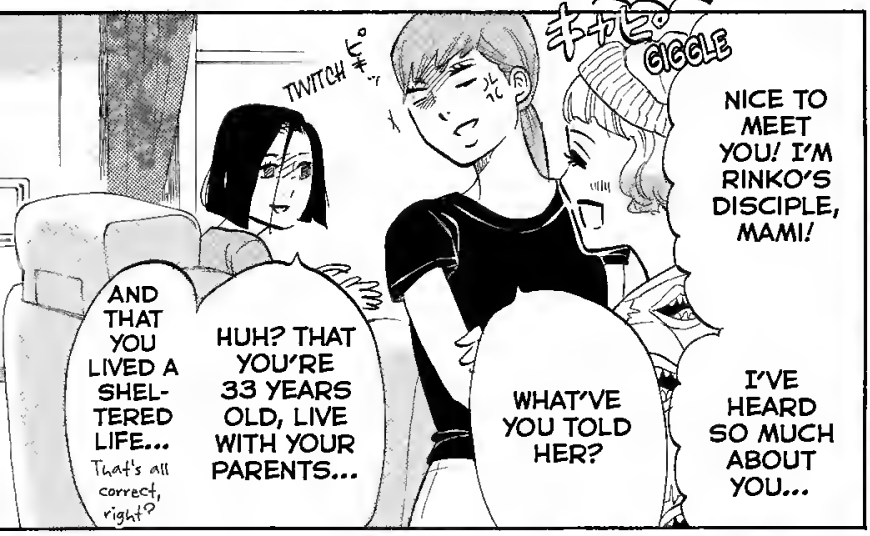

Kaori, do you have an appointment open today?
RINKO
I want you to do my nails to cheer me up.
IT WASN'T A CALL TO ACTION.
HUH.


THE WHAT-IF LINE IS EARLY TODAY...
OH!
FWAP


...GIVE ME A HAPPY, HAPPY MANICURE THAT WILL PUT ME IN HIGH SPIRITS...
...YOU'RE MORE DEPRESSED THAN I THOUGHT, RINKO...
I MEAN, HE DID REALLY TELL YOU OFF, BUT STILL...
SLUMP
PLEASE... DON'T TALK ABOUT THAT ANYMORE...
YEAH, YEAH.
THEN, TO CHEER YOU UP...
...HOW ABOUT WE TRY A NICE LEMON YELLOW ON YOUR NAILS?
PLAP ペタ
PLAP ペタ
DON'T!
IT'LL REMIND ME OF HIS HAIR!
ARGH! SORRY!
THEN I'LL PAINT THEM THE EXACT OPPOSITE! PURPLE!
WHUMP
...
SAY, KAORI...

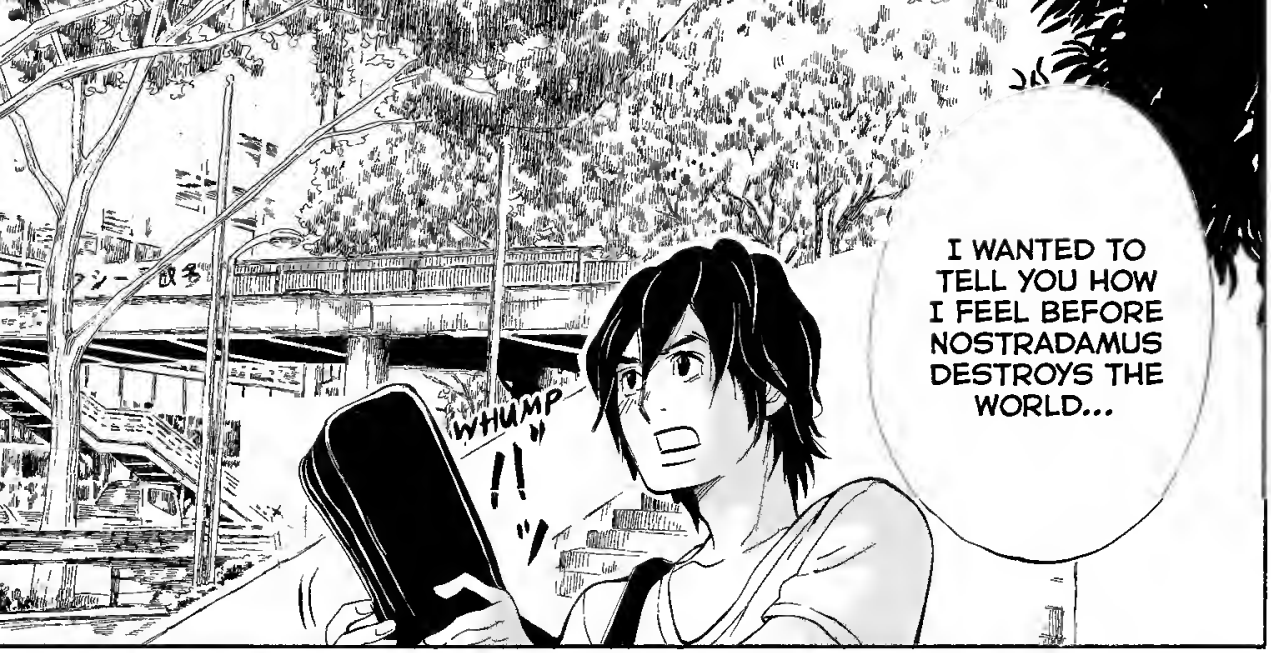
EEK!
IT WAS TEN YEARS AGO!! THE SAME YEAR MR. HAYASAKA PROPOSED TO YOU!!
WAS IT REALLY THAT LONG AGO?
ANCIENT HISTORY? HUH?
ONE
TWO
DON'T BRING UP ANCIENT HISTORY.
WHY DIDN'T YOU MARRY THAT MUSICIAN?
BEEP
YEAH, YEAH.
KAORI, GET IT FOR ME!
My hands!
THAT'S FROM THE OFFICE!
WHOA!
BUM-BADA-BADA
I realized it the other day!
THAT'S RIGHT! AS TERRIFYING AS IT IS, THEY'RE ALMOST ALL FROM AT LEAST TEN YEARS AGO!
THEN OUR MEMORIES OF PAST RELATIONSHIPS ARE...
WOW!
I'D LIKE TO COME OVER SO RINKO CAN LOOK AT IT AND WE CAN GET IT BACK TO THE CLIENT.
WE'VE GOT A PROJECT THAT HAS TO BE CHECKED IMMEDIATELY.
THIS IS HER ASSISTANT MAMI.
OH, I'M SORRY. RINKO MUST BE GETTING HER NAILS DONE RIGHT NOW, HUH?
TMP
TMP
TMP
STOP THAT, YOU IDIOT!
HELLO? THIS IS RINKO KAMATA, THE WOMAN WITH A BROKEN HEART.
Spare me the stupid jokes!

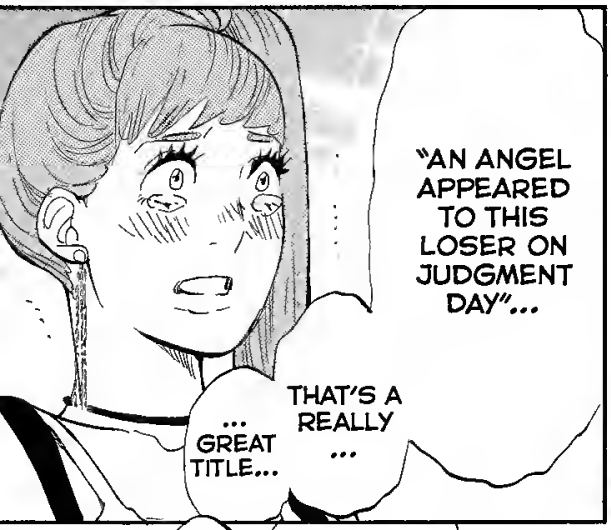

DING-DONG
ピンポーン
Uh, the building's almost next door...
SHE'S FAST BECAUSE SHE'S YOUNG!
SHE'S AL-READY HERE.
I WAS NOT DUMPED!! TECHNI-CALLY!!
AND DON'T YOU DARE SPILL THE BEANS TO HER!!
HEY, ISN'T THAT THE GIRL? YOU KNOW, THE ONE MR. HAYASAKA DUMPED YOU FOR...
MAMI, OR WHAT-EVER HER NAME IS.
SHE SAYS SHE'S COMING HERE.
Rargh!
BEEP

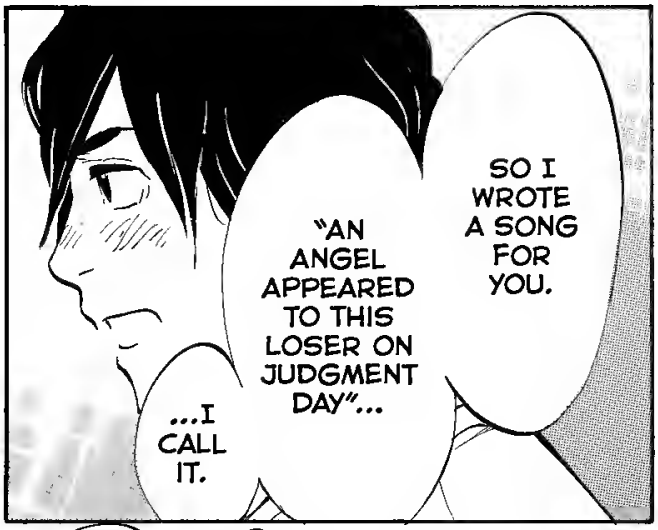

TWITCH
キャピ
GIGGLE
NICE TO MEET YOU! I'M RINKO'S DISCIPLE, MAMI!
I'VE HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT YOU...
WHAT'VE YOU TOLD HER?
HUH? THAT YOU'RE 33 YEARS OLD, LIVE WITH YOUR PARENTS...
AND THAT YOU LIVED A SHEL-TERED LIFE...
That's all correct, right?

I WAS ABOUT HER AGE WHEN I STARTED SEEING RYO.

KAORI
...
GO OUT WITH ME.
RYO...

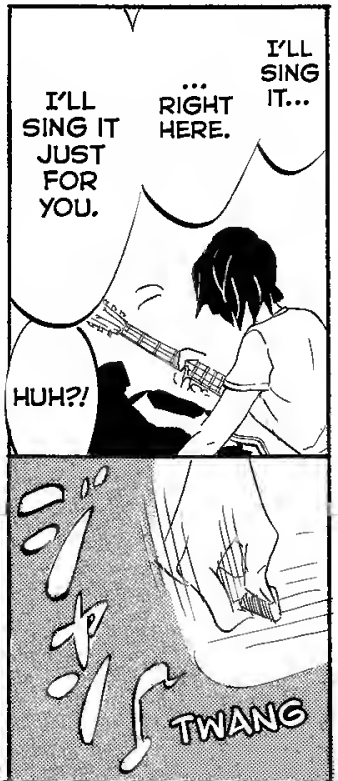

I WANTED TO TELL YOU HOW I FEEL BEFORE NOSTRADAMUS DESTROYS THE WORLD...
WHUMP


"AN ANGEL APPEARED TO THIS LOSER ON JUDGMENT DAY"...
THAT'S A REALLY ...
... GREAT TITLE...


SO I WROTE A SONG FOR YOU.
"AN ANGEL APPEARED TO THIS LOSER ON JUDGMENT DAY"...
...I CALL IT.

OH, NOSTRADA-MUS! WHEN THE TIME COMES, I WANNA BE WITH HER!
AS LONG AS I'M WITH HER, I DON'T CARE IF THE WORLD ENDS! MY ANGEL!
AH—
BWANG
BWANG
BWANG

YEAH!
DID YOU EVER MAYBE KIND OF THINK ABOUT WHO YOU WANNA BE WITH WHEN THE TIME COMES?
OH, TELL ME NOS-TRADA-MUS!
ジャカ♪
BWAW
ジャカ♪
BWAW


I'LL SING IT...
... RIGHT HERE.
I'LL SING IT JUST FOR YOU.
HUH?!
ジャカ♪
TWANG

THE WORLD DIDN'T END.
CLACK
IN FACT, IT WAS CHOSEN TO HOST THE OLYMPICS A SECOND TIME.
AND OF COURSE, TOKYO DIDN'T END EITHER.
CONGRATULATIONS TO TOKYO!! THE NEXT HOST OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES!!
AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, I WAS 33.

I WENT OUT WITH RYO FOR FIVE YEARS, AND THEN WE BROKE UP.
I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM SINCE.
I COULDN'T IMAGINE MARRYING A BROKE MUSICIAN LIKE HIM.
I COULDN'T BE ONE OF THOSE ADMIRABLE WOMEN WHO SUPPORTS HER BROKE MAN WHILE HE CHASES HIS DREAMS.
AH...
IT'S THAT VIDEO AGAIN...
Burkets
GOOD FOR HIM...
EVEN JUST SUCCEEDING IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY IS AMAZING...

IF HE'D HIT IT BIG WHEN HE WAS YOUNGER LIKE THIS GUY...
IF RYO'S MUSIC CAREER HAD WORKED OUT...
...WE'D PROBABLY BE MARRIED RIGHT NOW.
OH!
KAORI!
GASP!
SORRY FOR BARGING INTO YOUR SALON EARLIER!
LOOK AT THIS! I ACTUALLY MANAGED TO BUY SOME POPCORN! THERE WASN'T A LINE TODAY!
TMP TMP TMP
OH, POPCORN IS THE BIG THING RIGHT NOW...
SHE'S WEARING SHORTS !!

KEY ALWAYS APPEARS IN THEIR VIDEOS, AND AT FIRST I ONLY WATCHED FOR HIM, BUT THEN I STARTED REALLY LIKING THE SONGS TOO!
OH, UH... I WOULDN'T REALLY SAY I LIKE THEM, PER SE...
THIS SONG IS SOOO BIG RIGHT NOW!
AREN'T THEY GREAT?
DO YOU LIKE BUM-KEY'S, KAORI ?!
KEY IS IN THIS ONE, RIGHT ?
BUM-KEY'S !!
HUH ?!
HUH?!
I'LL INVITE YOU NEXT TIME!
...IT SEEMS LIKE.
HUH ?!
I'M SURE I WAS THE SAME WAY WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.
YOUNG GIRLS TALK ABOUT THEM-SELVES A LOT.
IF IT'S GOOD, I'LL BUY SOME MORE!
ARE YOU SURE ?
HUH ?!
OH, HERE! HAVE A CAN!!
I'LL TEXT YOU SOON AS IT'S SETTLED.
HUH ?!
SET-TLED?!
FWIP
See ya!
CAN I ASK RINKO FOR YOUR LINE ADDRESS?
I WASN'T LISTENING TO ONE WORD SHE SAID.
UH-OH ...

I WAS ALWAYS RUNNING AROUND ON TOP OF THE WORLD LIKE THAT.
AND I'M SURE I USED TO BE THE SAME WAY.
Mr. Hayasaka knows how to pick 'em...
TMP TMP TMP
SHE'S A BIT OF A BLABBER-MOUTH, BUT... YEAH... SHE'S A GOOD KID...

WHEN WE FIRST MOVED IN TOGETHER, RYO AND I PARTIED EVERY DAY.
IT DIDN'T MATTER THAT WE HAD NO MONEY.
AS LONG AS WE LOVED EACH OTHER, WE COULD OVERCOME ANY PROBLEM.
I REALLY BELIEVED THE DAY WOULD COME WHEN RYO...
...WOULD WRITE BRILLIANT SONGS WITH THE POWER OF LOVE AND FILL UP BUDOUKAN ARENA.
BUDOUKAN OR BUST!!
BUT YEARS WENT BY...
...AND HE WAS STILL A POOR MUSICIAN.

It's hot...
OH? BUT YOURS SEEMS TO BE WORKING FINE.
THE AIR CONDITIONER IN OUR SPACE HAS BEEN ACTING UP ALL DAY...
EXCUSE ME.
KER-CHUNK
ガチャ
...AND, WELL, YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS ...
...GOT DRUNK ON WINE I WASN'T USED TO DRINKING...
ON A WHIM, I HAD DINNER WITH HIM...
A DOCTOR ...
AND MY EYES CREPT TO THE COSMETIC SURGEON WHO SHARED A BUILDING WITH THE NAIL SALON I WORKED AT...
THAT SAME OLD, STALE STORY.
THE END.
AND RYO SAW MY PHONE.

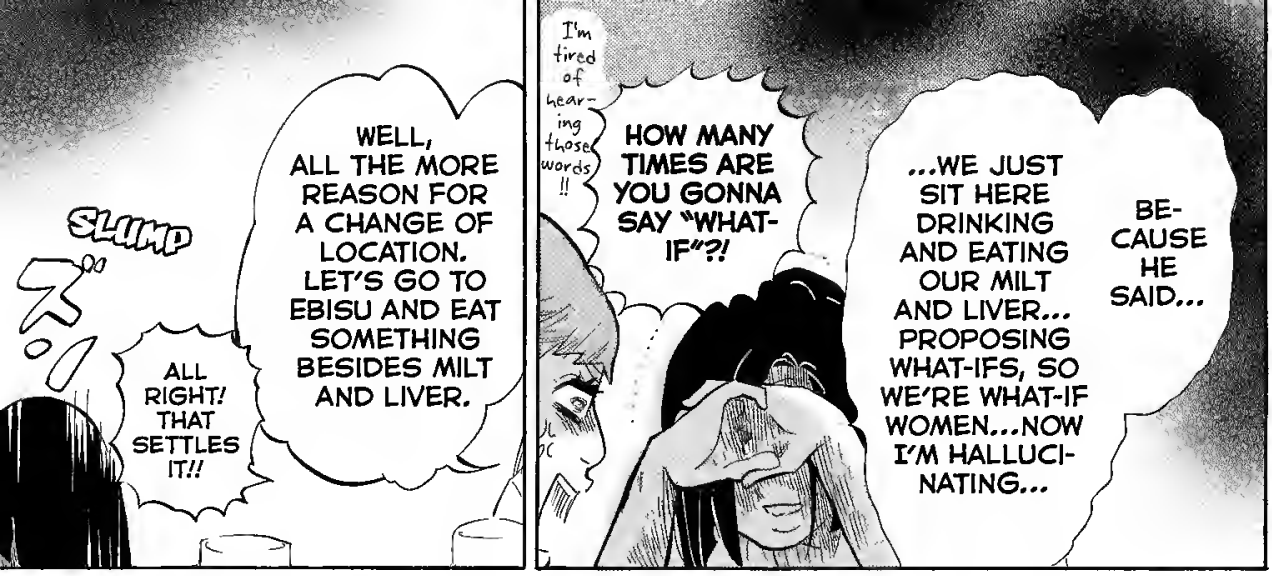
BUT...
...AND IGNORED THE MACKEREL ...
I GOT DIS-TRACTED BY THE URCHIN THAT CAME AROUND LATER...
...BUT THE SAME ISN'T TRUE OF MEN.
WITH CONVEYOR-BELT SUSHI, A PLATE YOU LET SLIP BY MIGHT COME BACK AROUND AGAIN...
...I REALIZED I DON'T EVEN LIKE URCHIN THAT MUCH.
...LATER...
RINKO... YOU CAN'T...
...LET THIS ONE PASS YOU BY...

HUH?!
CHOMP CHOMP
MUNCH MUNCH
RINKO! IT'S BEEN PICKED UP!
THEY PICKED UP THE PROJECT WE DISCUSSED THE OTHER DAY!!
YES!! IT'S GOING TO BE SPONSORED BY THE MAKERS OF THOSE "GREEN JUICE CAPSULES," THE HEALTHY EARTH CORPORATION!!
"THE DEVIL'S GOSSIP CIRCLE"?
YOU MEAN THAT ONE?
MUNCH
We can drink to it with this tea! ☆
CONGRATULATIONS, RINKO!!
THEY PICKED IT UP?! THAT'S GREAT!!
BUMKEY'S IS GONNA SING THE THEME SONG, TOO! THAT'S SO AWESOME!
AND I SUPPOSE IT'S GOING WELL...
WELL, IT STARTED FILMING...
THANK U!!
HUH?!
YOU'RE EATING TOO MUCH, RINKO.
THAT PROJECT I WAS TAKEN OFF OF ...
FORGET ABOUT THAT, WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER ONE?
CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP
OH...

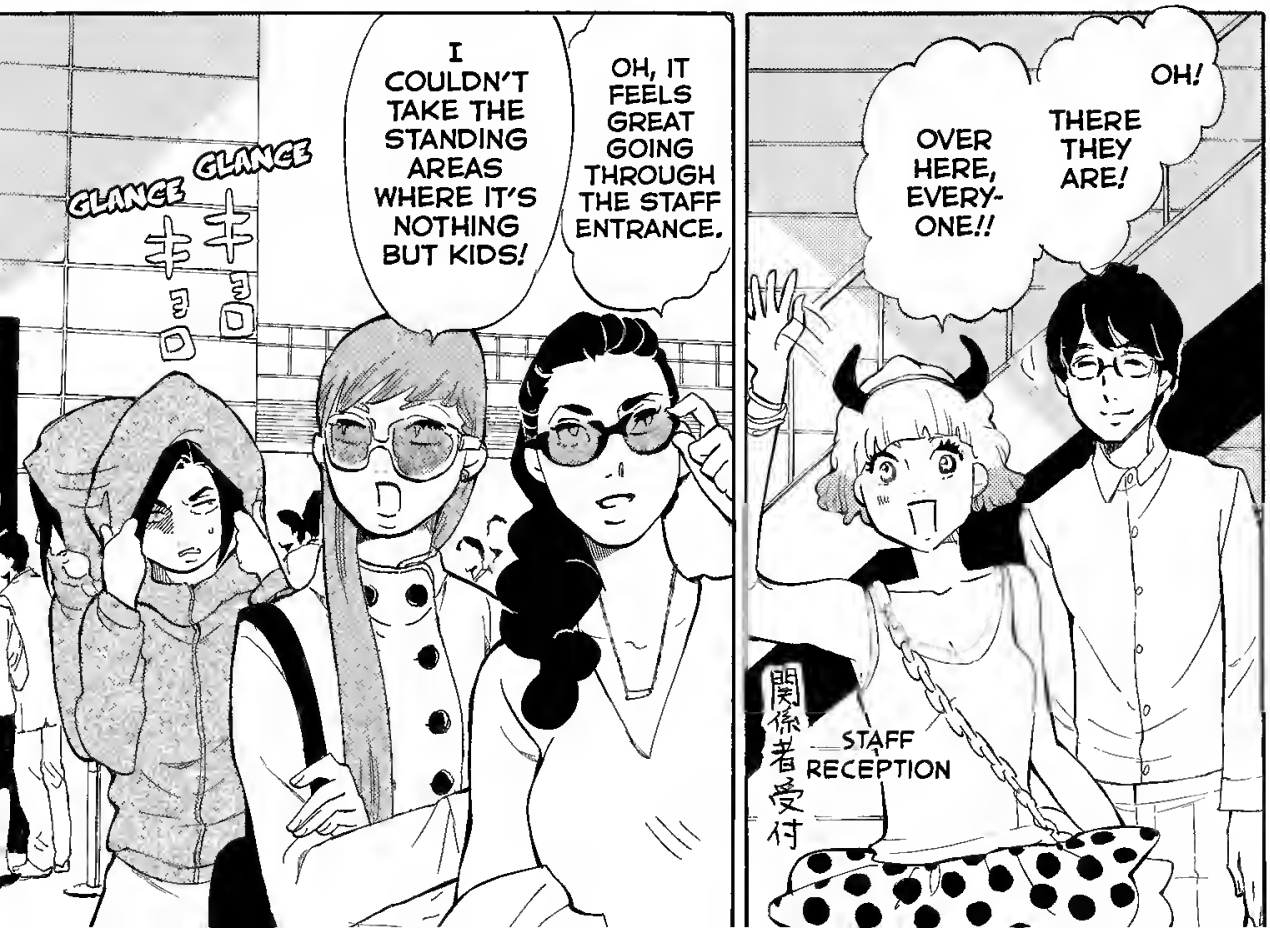
HUH?
I THINK THEY'LL PLAY IT. I DOUBT THEY'D INVITE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN THE SHOW IF THEY WEREN'T GOING TO.
I MEAN, IT'S THEIR NEWEST SONG, SO THEY'VE GOTTA, RIGHT?
MR. HAYA-SAKA! DO YOU THINK THEY'LL PLAY IT AT THE CON-CERT?
BUMKEY'S DOESN'T DO MANY TV APPEARANCES.
EVERYBODY'S SOOO GONNA BE TALKING ABOUT IT! I WONDER IF THEY'LL SING IT ON THE MUSIC SHOWS.
...THE BAND FROM THAT VIDEO?
YOU MEAN ...
ズーン
SLUMP
FLOP
I INVITED KAORI BECAUSE SHE'S A BUMKEY'S FAN, SO LET'S ALL GO TO-GETHER!!
YOU'LL COME TOO, RIGHT?
WHAT? CONCERT? YOU'RE GOING?
WE DON'T KNOW EITHER !!
HOW DID YOU GET YOUR-SELVES INTO THIS SITUA-TION?
HUH?
酒処
PUB

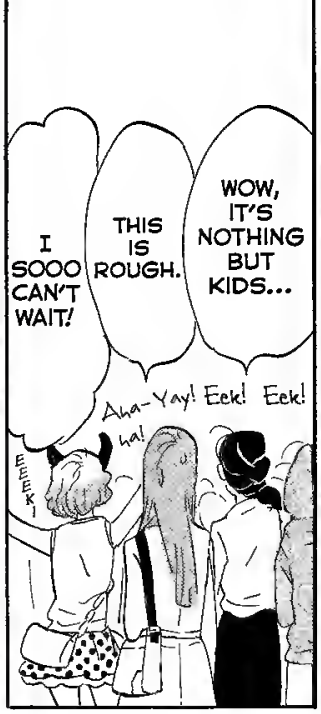
SEEING AS HE'S THE STAR OF THE SHOW AND MUSIC VIDEO, THE GREAT MR. KEY ...
HE'S VERY INVOLVED IN THE PRODUC-TION.
HE'S PROB-ABLY COMING TOO, RIGHT?
FLINCH
WHICH MEANS ...
...
Are you stupid ?!
WHY THE HELL DID YOU LET HER INVITE YOU TO THIS CONCERT ?!
SHE CHATTERS LIKE A SPACE ALIEN! THE WORDS DON'T EVEN REACH MY BRAIN!!
IF SO, I WANT TO SEE THAT.
IS IT A BAND MADE UP ENTIRELY OF HILL-BILLIES?
ARE THEY REALLY THAT BIG?
WHAT WAS THEIR NAME AGAIN? BUMP-KINS?
You're going ?!
YOU'VE GOTTA BE KID-DING!
STOP WITH THE LAME JOKES !!
YOU'RE INVOLVED WITH A MAN WHO'S INVOLVED WITH THE SHOW...
OH...
THEN, LET'S GO!
BUT ...
UGH ...
AREN'T THERE MORE THAN TEN RESTAU-RANTS THERE?
THEY'VE GOT PORK KEBABS, SUSHI, EVERY-THING YOU COULD DREAM OF!
THAT PLACE IS GREAT.
WHAT, REALLY? I'VE NEVER BEEN.
BLUSH
WE CAN STOP BY EBISU YOKO-CHO ON THE WAY HOME.
OH, THAT PLACE!
WELL, ISN'T IT AT THE LIQUIDROOM EBISU?
The venue.
BEEEAAM
CLINT

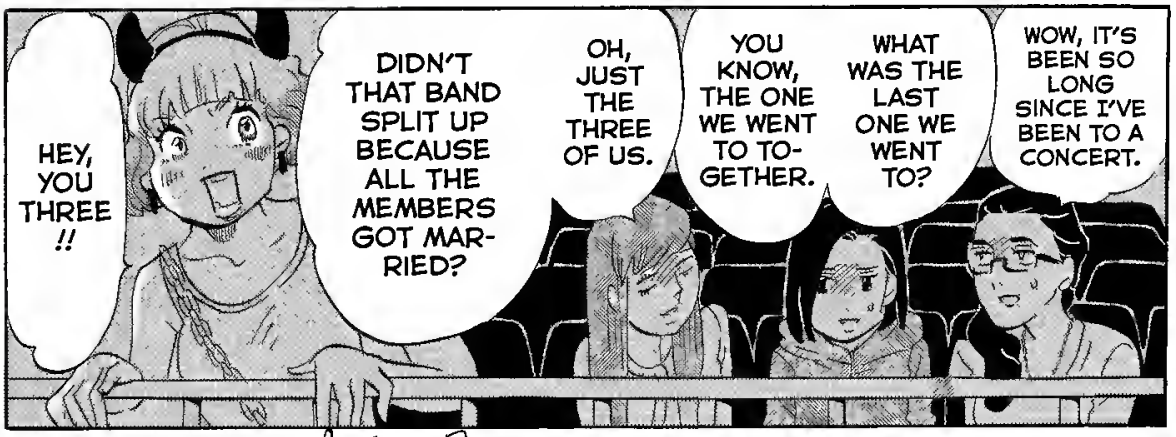
LISTEN, YOU...
I CAN UNDERSTAND BEING BUMMED OUT BECAUSE OF WHAT HE SAID THE OTHER DAY...
YEAH. HE MAY HAVE GOTTEN SO ANGRY ABOUT YOU TELLING EVERYONE BECAUSE HE'S ACTUALLY SERIOUS ABOUT YOU.
NO MORE!!
GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG
WHUMP
...THAT WHEN I GET DRUNK LATELY, I'VE BEEN HALLUCINATING?
HUH?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
HEY...
DID YOU KNOW...
THUNK
It's empty?!
THIS ONE...
...AND THIS ONE...
...COME TO LIFE AND TALK TO ME...
AND THEY SAY...S-SUCH AWFUL THINGS...
CODFISH MILT AND LIVER?
SNIFF
Huh?
RINKO, ARE YOU... OKAY?
Like, in the head?
IT'S ALL BECAUSE HE CALLED US "WHAT-IF" WOMEN...


I'm tired of hearing those words!!
HOW MANY TIMES ARE YOU GONNA SAY "WHAT-IF"?!
...WE JUST SIT HERE DRINKING AND EATING OUR MILT AND LIVER... PROPOSING WHAT-IFS, SO WE'RE WHAT-IF WOMEN...NOW I'M HALLUCI-NATING...
BE-CAUSE HE SAID...
WELL, ALL THE MORE REASON FOR A CHANGE OF LOCATION. LET'S GO TO EBISU AND EAT SOMETHING BESIDES MILT AND LIVER.
SLUMP
ALL RIGHT! THAT SETTLES IT!!

Ebisu Station


GLANCE
GLANCE
キョロキョロ
I COULDN'T TAKE THE STANDING AREAS WHERE IT'S NOTHING BUT KIDS!
OH, IT FEELS GREAT GOING THROUGH THE STAFF ENTRANCE.
OH!
THERE THEY ARE!
OVER HERE, EVERY-ONE!!
関係者受付
STAFF RECEPTION

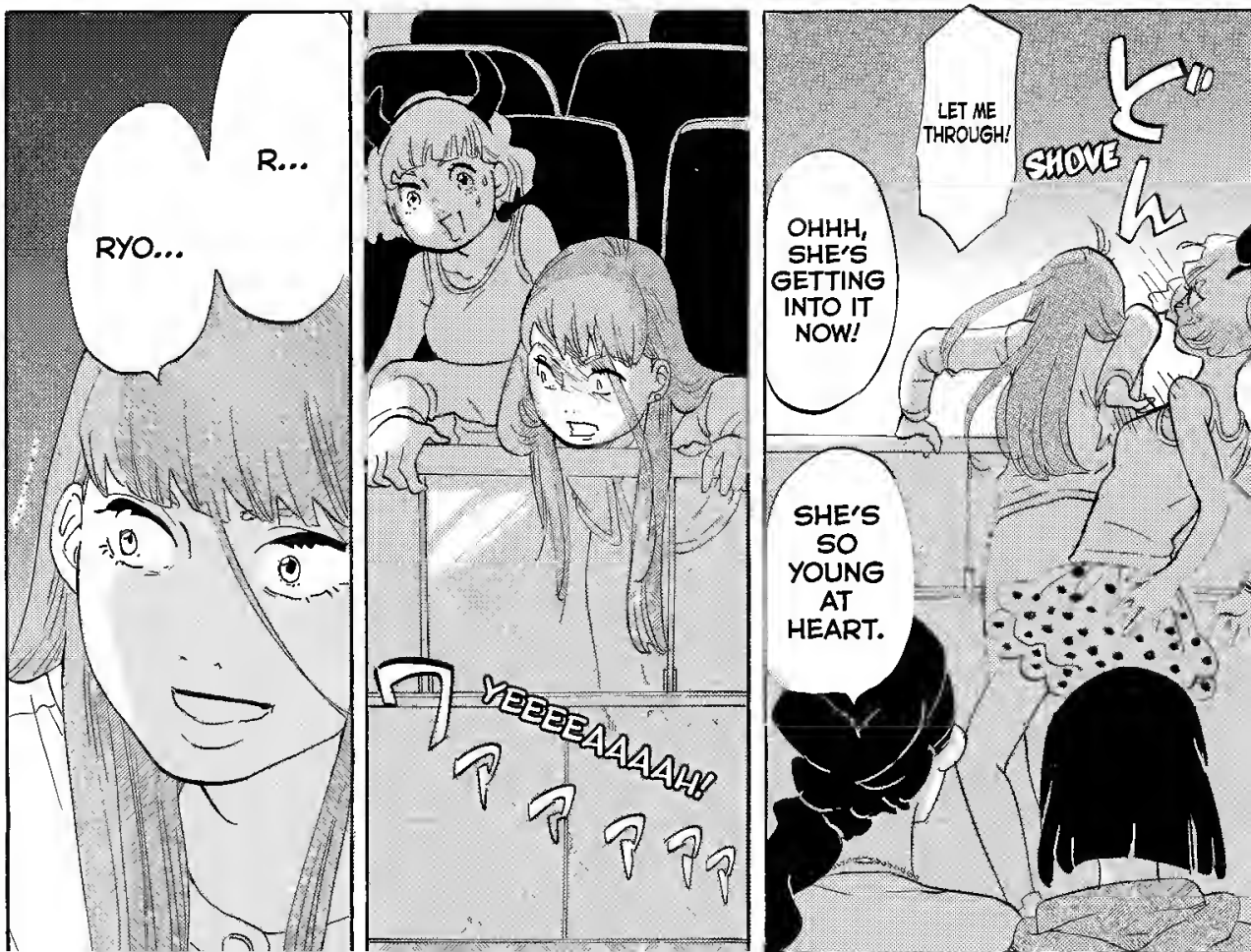


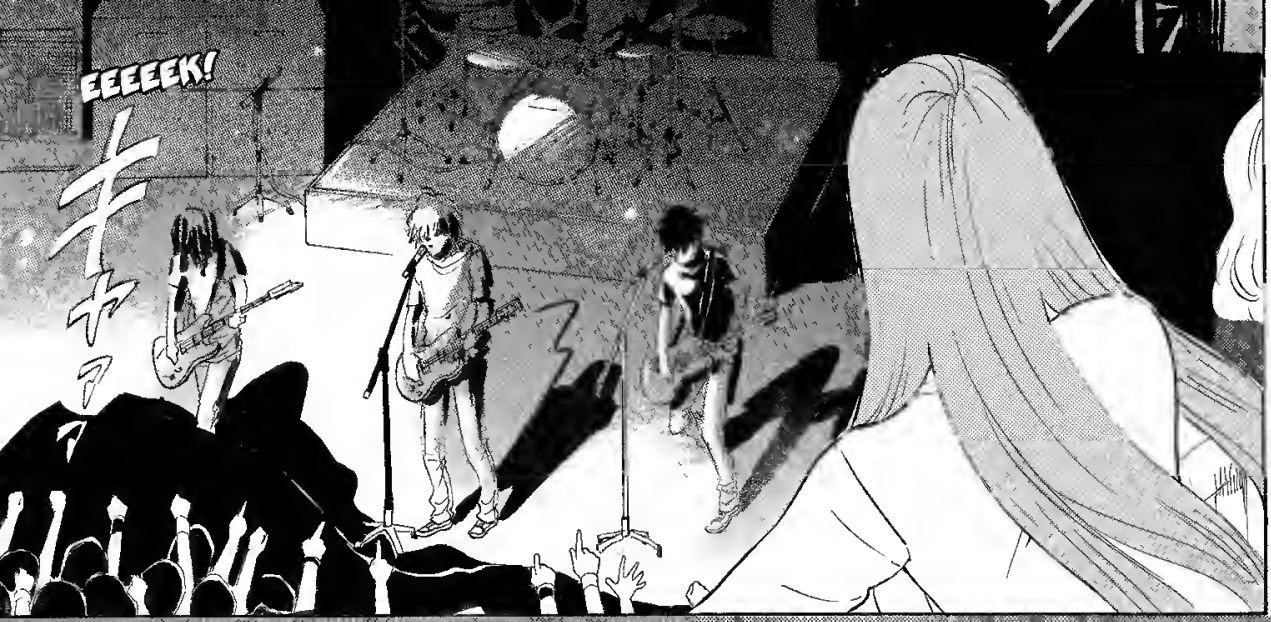


OH! THAT'S THEM!
ドドド BA-DOOM
キミミミ

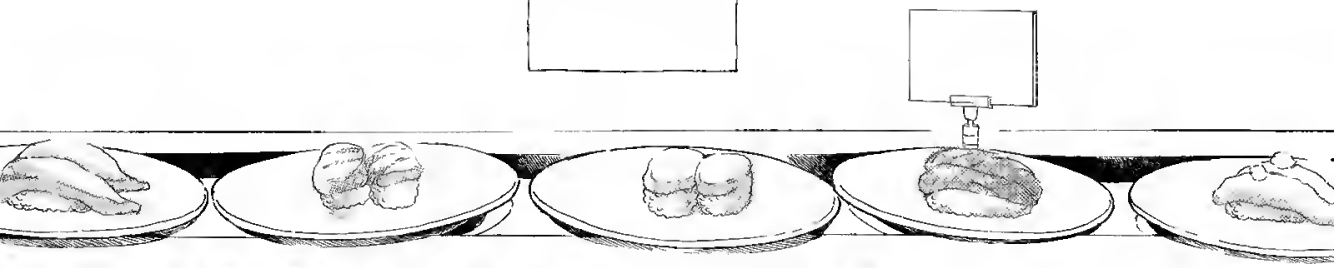
EEEEEK!
FLUTTER
FLUTTER
BWOW
YEEEAAAH!
LET ME HEAR YOU, EBISU!
YEAH!
BWOW
BWOW
BOOM
BOOM

WHUMP
SHE STOOD UP!
WHOA!


R...
RYO...
YEEEEAAAAH!
LET ME THROUGH!
SHOVE
OHHH, SHE'S GETTING INTO IT NOW!
SHE'S SO YOUNG AT HEART.



THE PLATE CAME AROUND AGAIN.



IN JAPANESE, THERE ARE SOME FISH THAT CHANGE NAMES OVER TIME. WHAT WERE THEY CALLED AGAIN?

O-OH YEAH, SHUSSEUO* !!

THE "MACKEREL" CAME BACK AS "YELLOWTAIL"...

NO, AS "TUNA"!

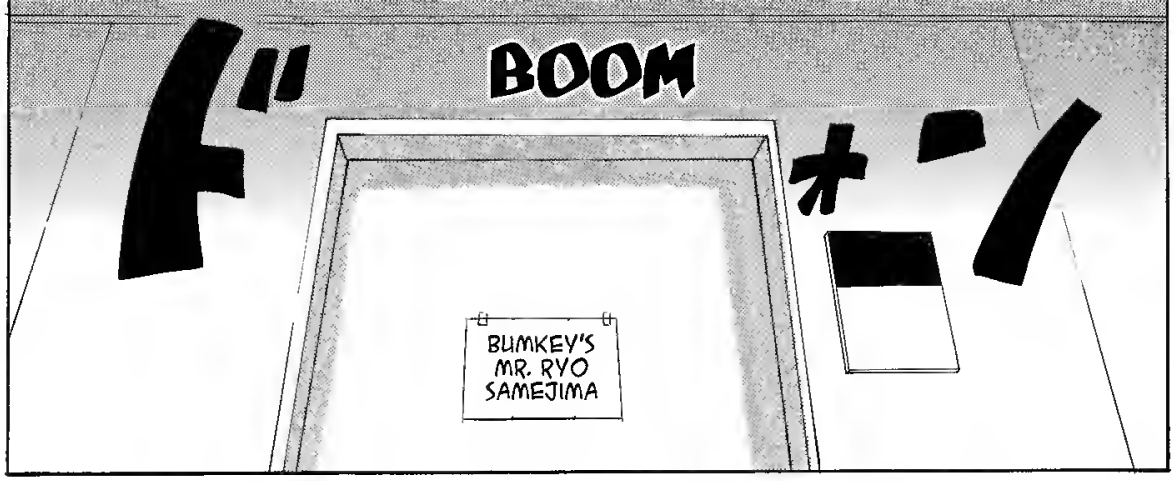
NO, IT CAME BACK AS "OTORO"!!

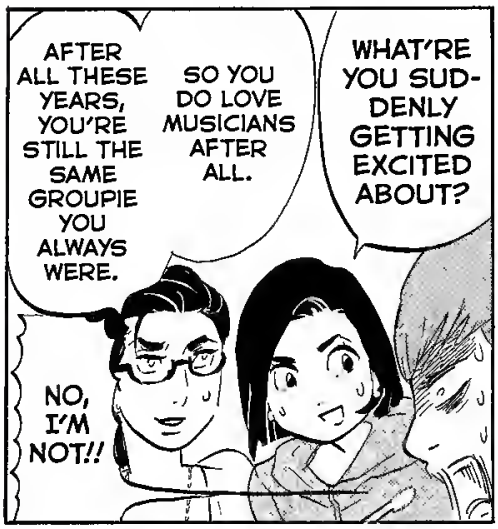
BANG BANG

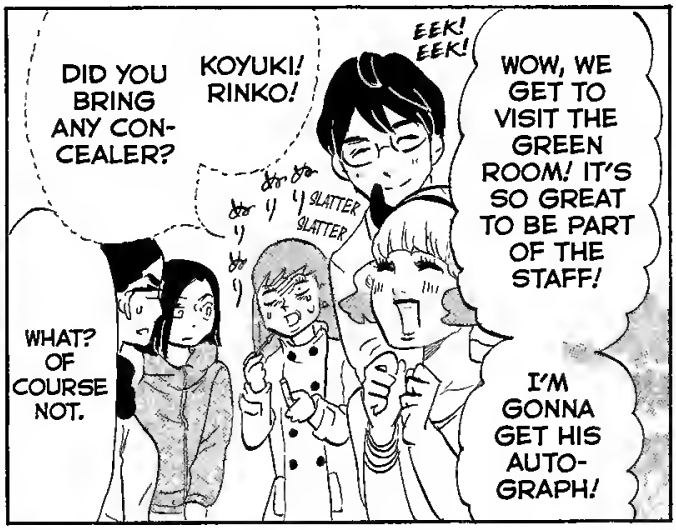
YEEEAAH!

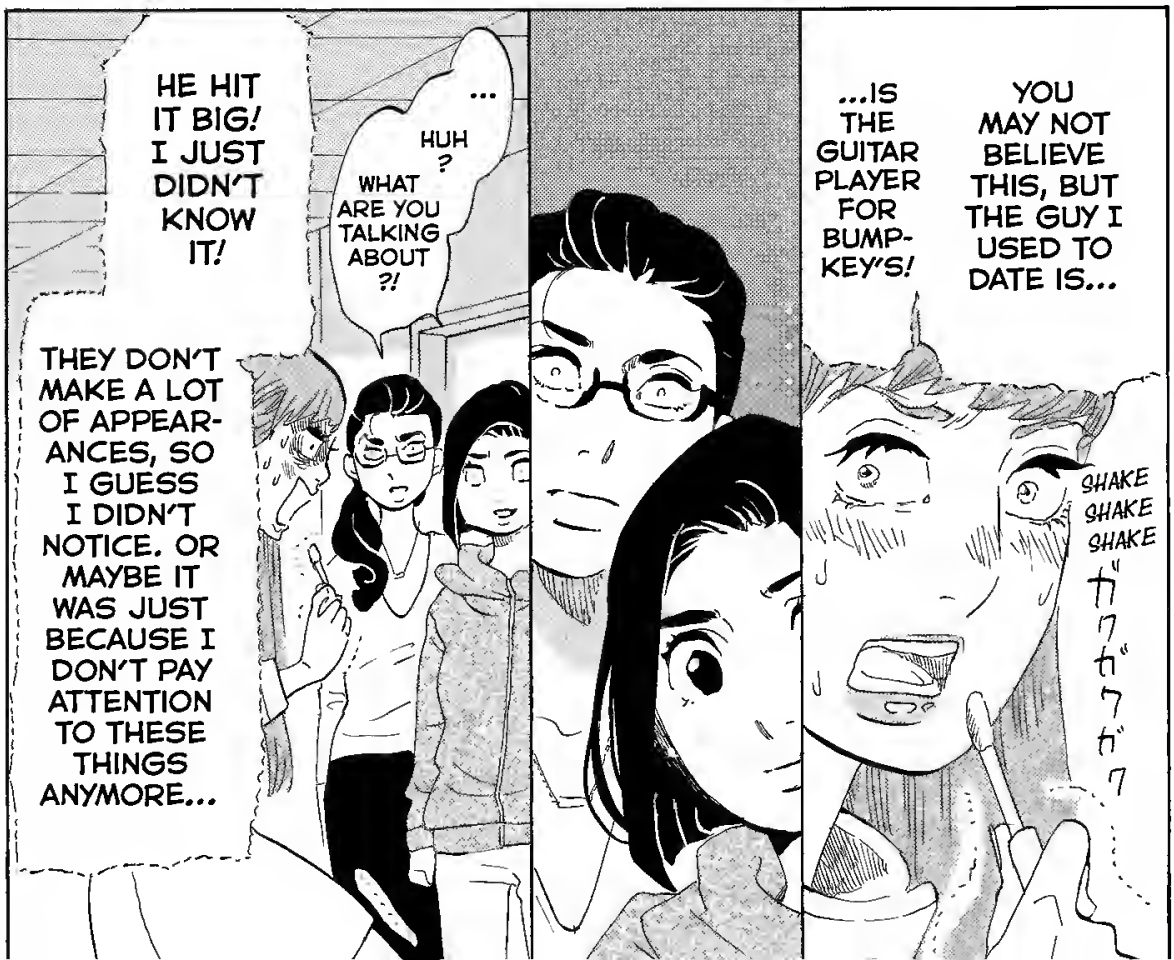
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... SINCE SHE LIVES WITH HER PARENTS AND HER MOM DOES ALL THE COOKING, SHE DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT FISH?

*AKA "CAREER FISH," BECAUSE THEY GET "PROMOTED" AS THEY GROW.


ドン
BOOM
オン
BUMKEY'S
MR. RYO
SAMEJIMA


AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, YOU'RE STILL THE SAME GROUPIE YOU ALWAYS WERE.
SO YOU DO LOVE MUSICIANS AFTER ALL.
WHAT'RE YOU SUDDENLY GETTING EXCITED ABOUT?
NO, I'M NOT!!

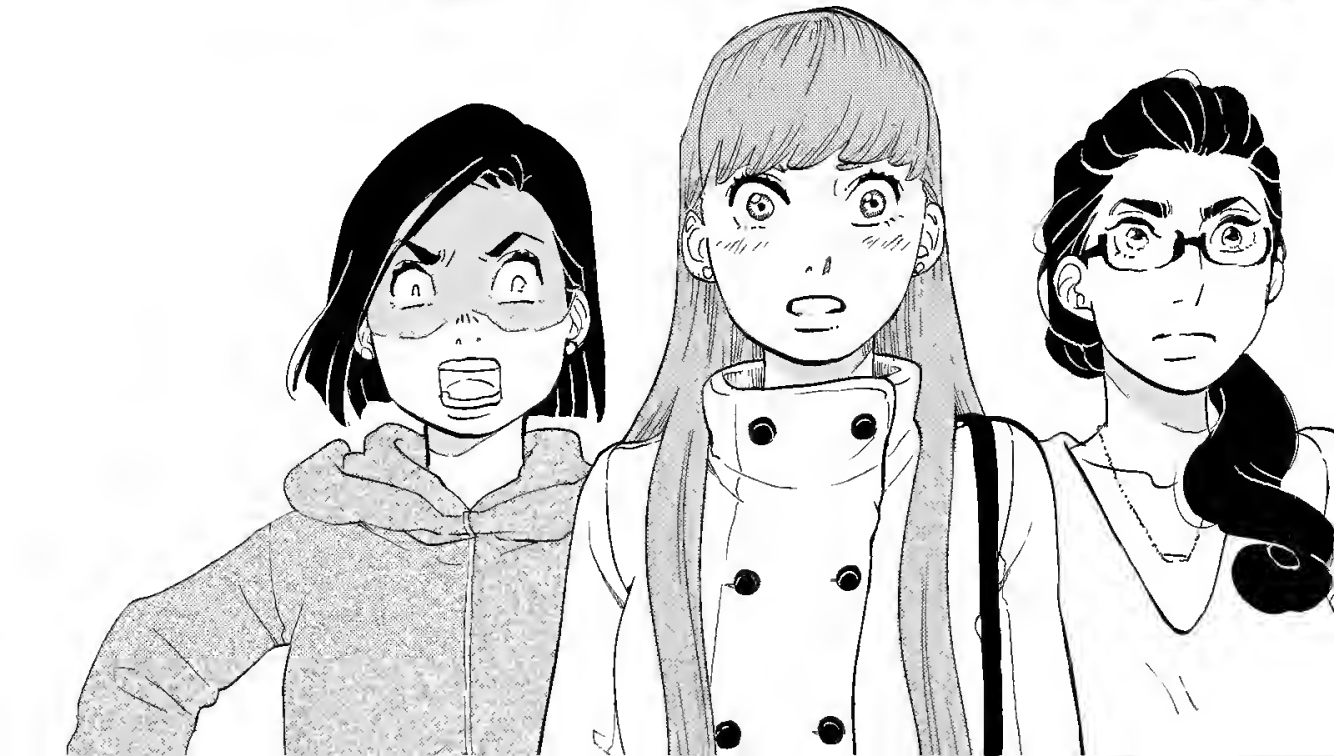

DID YOU BRING ANY CONCEALER?
KOYUKI! RINKO!
EEK! EEK!
WOW, WE GET TO VISIT THE GREEN ROOM! IT'S SO GREAT TO BE PART OF THE STAFF!
SLATTER SLATTER
WHAT? OF COURSE NOT.
I'M GONNA GET HIS AUTOGRAPH!


HE HIT IT BIG! I JUST DIDN'T KNOW IT!
...
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
THEY DON'T MAKE A LOT OF APPEARANCES, SO I GUESS I DIDN'T NOTICE. OR MAYBE IT WAS JUST BECAUSE I DON'T PAY ATTENTION TO THESE THINGS ANYMORE...
...IS THE GUITAR PLAYER FOR BUMPKEY'S!
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS, BUT THE GUY I USED TO DATE IS...
SHAKE SHAKE SHAKE
ガクガクガク

WHAT'S EVERYONE WHISPERING ABOUT?
I'M ABOUT TO KNOCK ON THE DOOR AND GO IN.
YOU WAIT ONE MINUTE, GIRLY!
TEE-HEE
キャピ☆
ALL RIGHT. THIS IS THIS YEAR'S BIGGEST...
GRUNCH
ピキ
FOUR! ALARMER!!
DON'T WORRY! WE'RE ALREADY HERE!
OKAY, EVEN IF YOU HAVE TO LIE, SAY YOU'RE HAPPY NOW!!
PRETEND NONE OF THIS HAPPENED !!
YEAH, YOU CAN'T TELL HIM YOU SPEND EVERY MORNING WATCHING THE SOAPS AT HOME WITH YOUR MOTHER!!
WHAT'RE YOU GONNA DO?! WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO?!
WHAT ARE YOU GONNA DO, KAORI ?!?!
WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
WHAT AM I GONNA DO? WHAT AM I GONNA DO?
NO... I...
I CAN'T LIE TO RYO...
WHEN I SAW HIM UP THERE ...
...PLAYING HIS GUITAR ON STAGE...

I KNEW THAT ONE DAY...
...I'D RUN INTO THE MAN I DUMPED SO CRUELLY IN THIS TOWN AGAIN.
...BUT I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD BE LIKE THIS.
BUMKEY'S MR. RYO SAMEJIMA
COMING!
TOKYO IS SMALLER THAN IT LOOKS.
246
413
413
KNOCK
KNOCK
EXCUSE ME!
I'M GOING IN NOW!
OKAY!
I REALIZED HE WAS STILL THE SAME RYO...
...WHILE I'VE...
...TURNED INTO THIS...
IT'S OKAY, KAORI! YOU STILL LOOK PRETTY YOUNG FOR 33!
AT THE VERY LEAST, YOU'RE THE YOUNGEST AND PRETTIEST LOOKING OUT OF THE THREE OF US!
OUT OF THE THREE OF US ?!
That's a shallow pool!

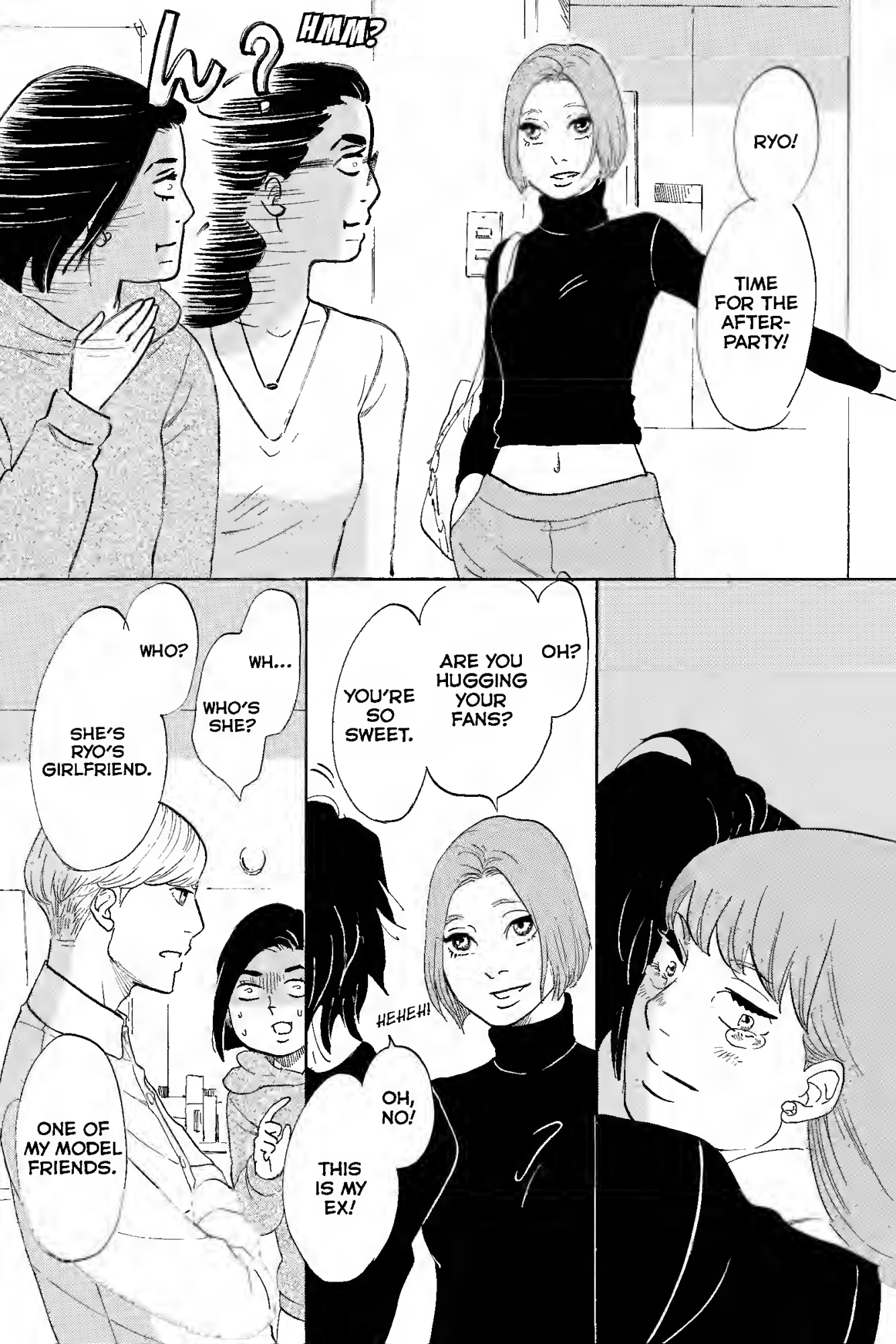
PAT
ポン
PAT
ポン
DON'T WORRY.
YOU LOOK BEAUTIFUL TODAY, KAORI.
THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU'VE GOT A LOT MORE GOING FOR YOU NOW...
...THAN YOU DID WHEN WE WERE YOUNG-ER.
...
REALLY?
YEAH, REALLY!
NOW ...
...LET'S GO!
SHOVE
KER-CHUNK
GREENROOM
楽屋



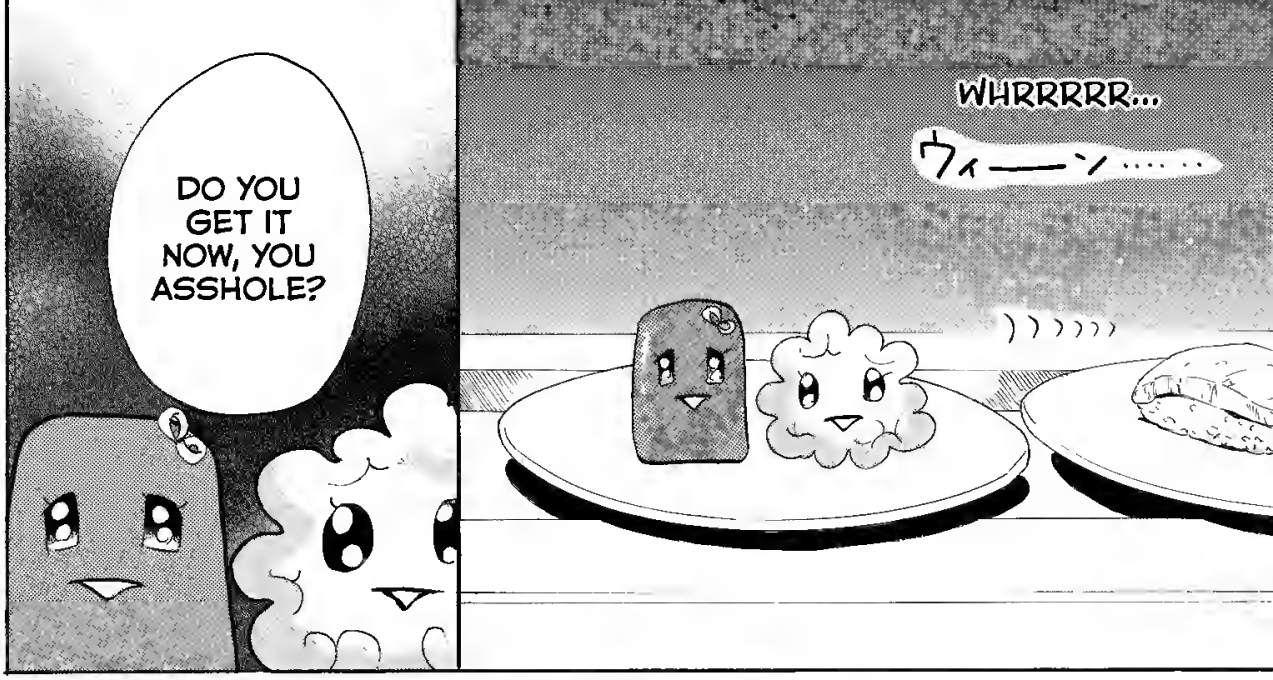
R... RYO...
HE IS HERE!!
HAYA-SAKA LIED TO ME!
KAORI...?
WHAT ARE YOU ...
...SPIN-STERS DOING HERE?
STOMP STOMP
FWIP
EEEK! IT'S THE REAL KEY!
EEK!
Move it, girly!
I'M GOING HOME!
FIDGET FIDGET
RYO... CON-GRATULA-TIONS...
KAORI ...
SORRY I NEVER CALLED...
KAORI ...
YOU'D BETTER FIND A DIFFERENT TEACHER, MISS.
YEAH, I DO!! YOU GOT A PROB-LEM WITH THAT?!
WOW, YOU'VE GOT AN APPREN-TICE?
NICE TO MEET YOU, KEY! I'M RINKO'S APPRENTICE, MAMI!
YOUR DREAM ...
...CAME TRUE...
THAT'S WHAT I WANT TO KNOW!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THE GREEN-ROOM ANYWAY ?!

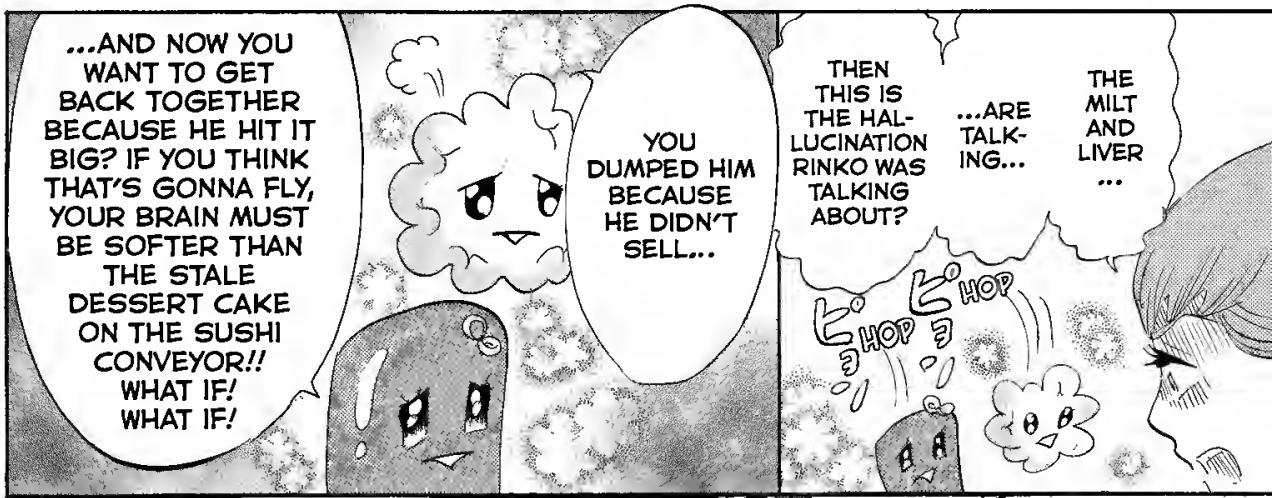
!!
KAORI ...
HEY, THIS TWERP'S NOT FUNNY!
AHAHA! THAT IS SOOO HILARI-OUS, MR. KEY!
I'M SO GLAD ...
...I SAW YOU AGAIN ...
I'M SO GLAD ...
...YOU FOUND ME, KAORI...
がばっ
WHUMP

WHA?!
R... RYO...
IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU, KAORI.
THAT LAST SONG WE PLAYED TONIGHT ...
...IS ONE I WROTE IN RESPONSE TO THAT NOSTRADAMUS SONG.
NO MATTER WHAT...
...I WANTED TO PERFORM THAT SONG I WROTE FOR YOU ONSTAGE.
REALLY? I COULDN'T TELL AT ALL...
OH, WELL, I LET A PRO HANDLE THE LYRICS.
AH, THAT EXPLAINS IT.
BUT, ANYWAY, KAORI!
KER-CHUNK
I LOVE YOU.
I LOVE YOU, KAORI.


HMM?
RYO!
TIME FOR THE AFTER-PARTY!
OH?
ARE YOU HUGGING YOUR FANS?
YOU'RE SO SWEET.
HEHEH!
OH, NO!
THIS IS MY EX!
WH...
WHO'S SHE?
WHO?
SHE'S RYO'S GIRLFRIEND.
ONE OF MY MODEL FRIENDS.

WHEN YOU LET A PLATE GET AWAY, THE NEXT PERSON TAKES IT.
I DIDN'T EVEN UNDER-STAND THAT SIMPLE CONCEPT.
MUSICIANS SAY THE WORDS "I LOVE YOU" AS EASY AS THEY SING SONGS.
THERE ARE NO LONGER ANY PLATES ON MY CONVEYOR.
WHRRRRR...
GASP


DO YOU GET IT NOW, YOU ASSHOLE?
WHRRRRR...
ウィーン……

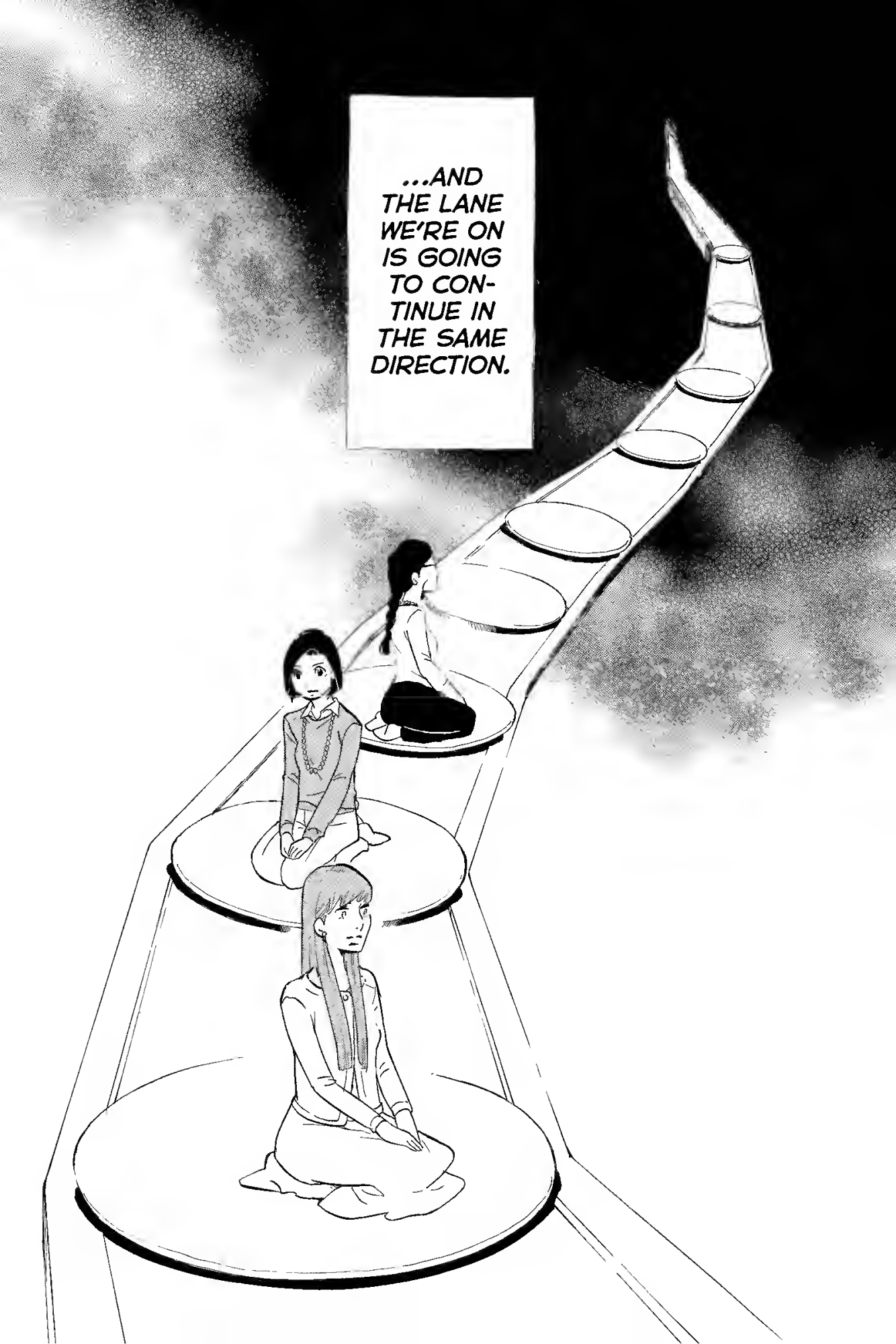

...AND NOW YOU WANT TO GET BACK TOGETHER BECAUSE HE HIT IT BIG? IF YOU THINK THAT'S GONNA FLY, YOUR BRAIN MUST BE SOFTER THAN THE STALE DESSERT CAKE ON THE SUSHI CONVEYOR!! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
YOU DUMPED HIM BECAUSE HE DIDN'T SELL...
THEN THIS IS THE HAL-LUCINATION RINKO WAS TALKING ABOUT?
...ARE TALK-ING...
THE MILT AND LIVER ...
ヒョHOP
ヒョHOP

DON'T MAKE US LAUGH! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
...YOU MIGHT HAVE THOUGHT YOU STILL HAD A CHANCE. BUT...
WHEN YOU SAW HIM STRUMMING HIS GUITAR SO COOLLY ON STAGE...
WE'RE CALLING YOU SOFT !!
What if, what if... that metaphor was hard to understand? Oops...
SO DOES THAT MAKE ME HARD OR SOFT?
HUH ?!

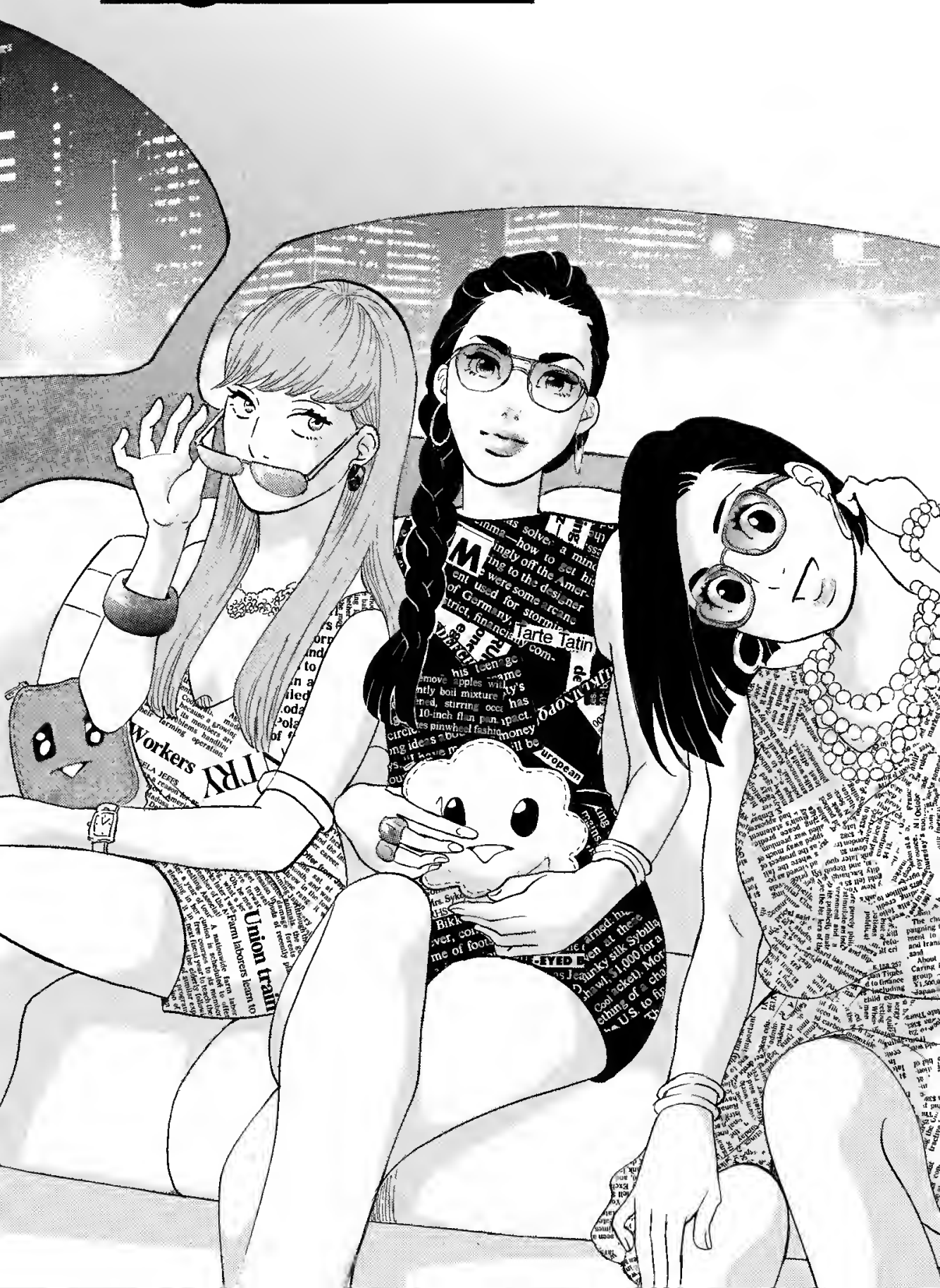
HUH?!
IN THE REAL WORLD ...
パチン SNAP
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THE PASSAGE OF TIME IN THE REAL WORLD ISN'T LIKE THE LANES OF THIS SUSHI CONVEYOR?
HEY!
LISTEN, KAORI.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I WAS THINK-ING!
THE FLOW OF TIME IS A ONE-WAY STREET.
NOTHING COMES BACK AGAIN.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THE LANE ONLY GOES ONE WAY?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... TIME DOESN'T GO BACK-WARDS?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU THREE JUST KEEP GROWING OLDER?
EVERY MINUTE AND SECOND.
EVERY HOUR.
EVERY DAY.

WHRRRRR
ウィーン……
THEN ...
...WHAT'S WAITING FOR US?
WHO KNOWS?
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS WAITING FOR YOU?
THE KIND OF UNDER-STATED LOVE...
...AND STABLE LIFE...
...WE COULDN'T ACHIEVE WHEN WE WERE YOUNG?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WHAT YOU MEAN BY "STABLE"?
HUH?!
SHALL WE TAKE A GUESS ?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THE ANSWER WAS MONEY AND FAME?
YOU'RE ONE OF THOSE WOMEN WHO JUDGE MEN BY NOTHING BUT THEIR STATUS.

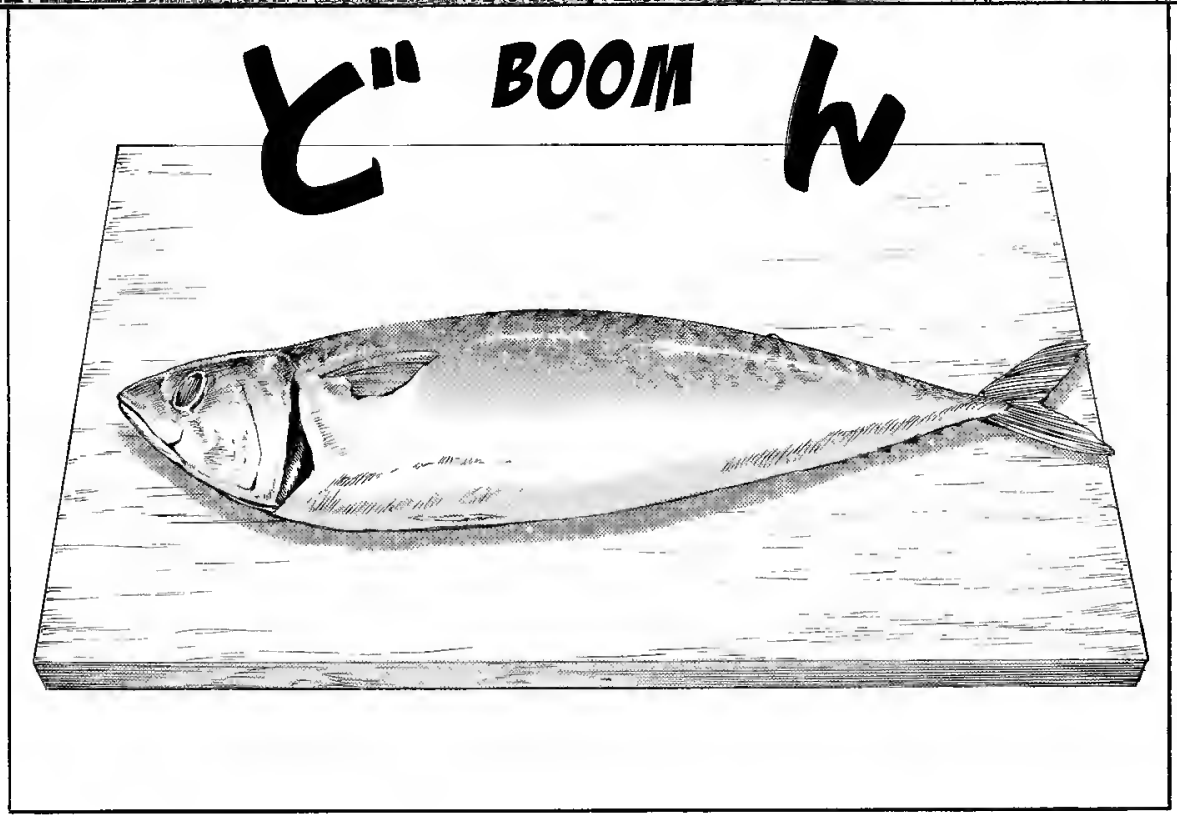
I JUST REALIZED THAT THE THINGS I TOSSED ASIDE WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT WHEN I WAS YOUNG...
...ARE THINGS I ABSOLUTELY CANNOT ACQUIRE NOW THAT I'M OLDER.
PHOTO BOOTH
I CAN'T RETURN TO THOSE DAYS.
YOU CAN'T TURN BACK TIME.
THE WORLD DIDN'T END...


...AND THE LANE WE'RE ON IS GOING TO CON-TINUE IN THE SAME DIRECTION.

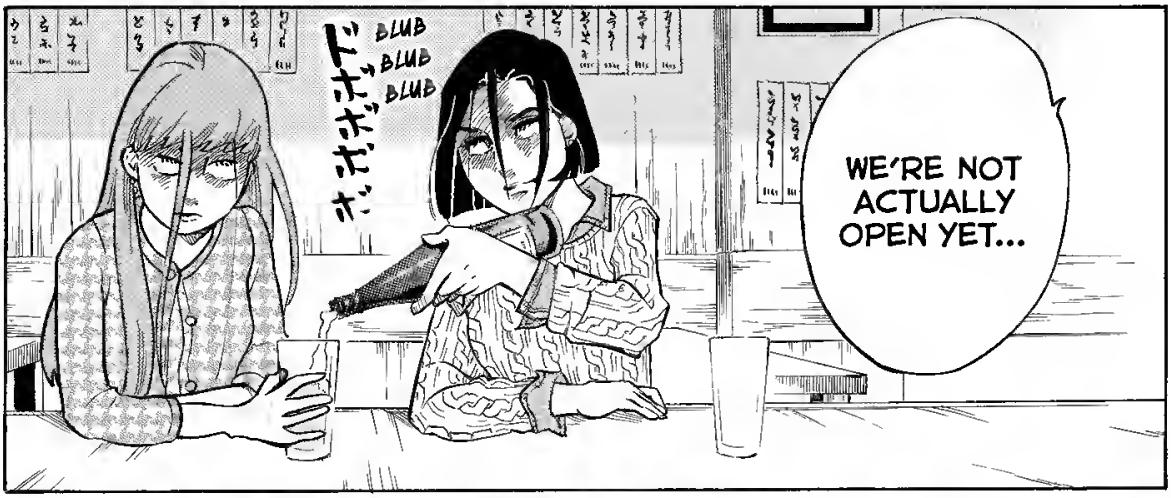
ACT 7 SOUSED MACKEREL WOMAN



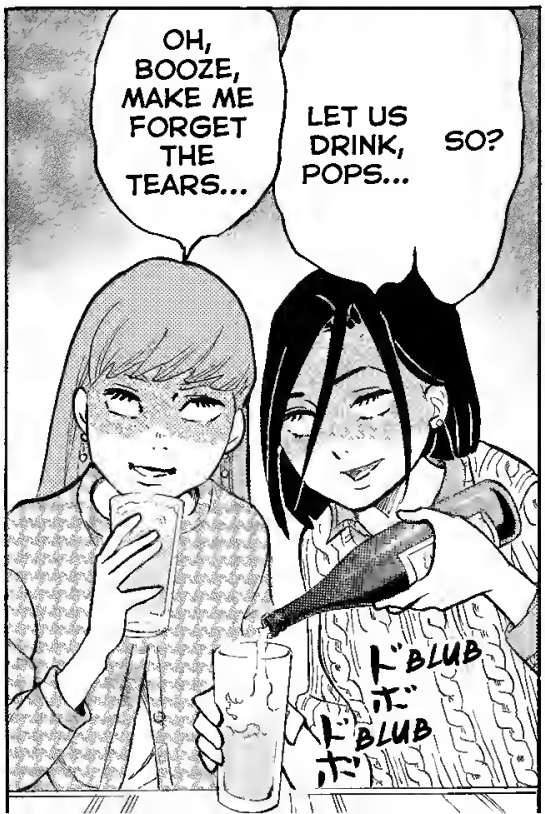
I'VE AL-
WAYS BEEN
CALLED
A DIRECT
WOMAN.

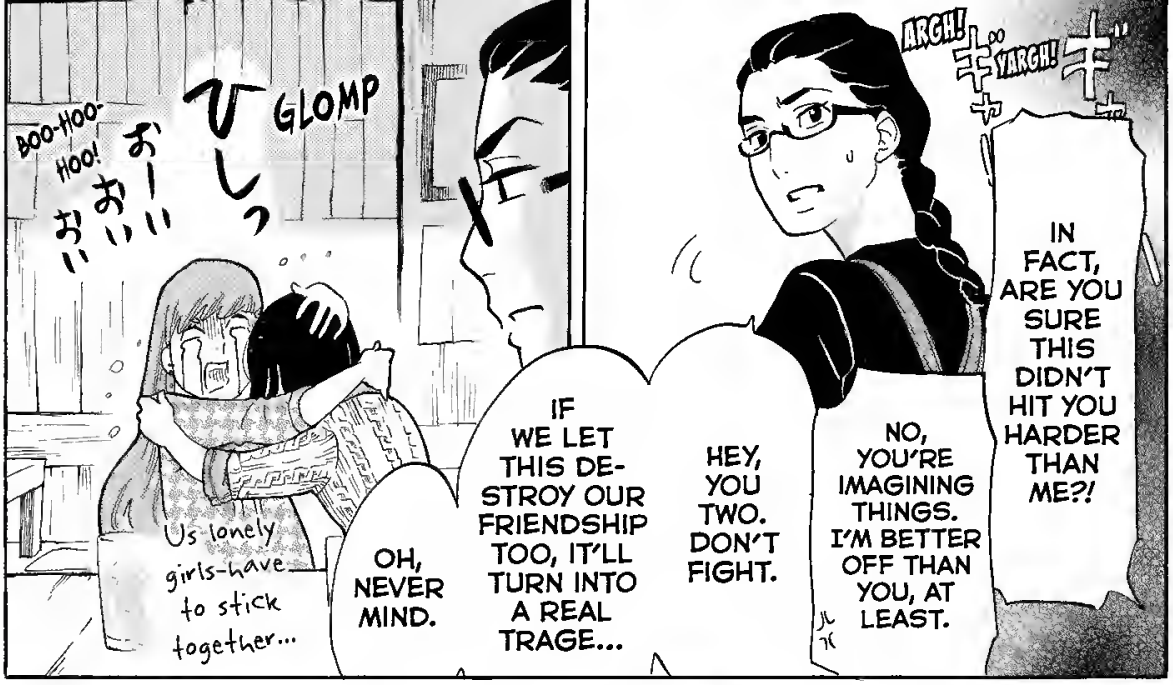

ど" BOOM ん

HEY, YOU TWO.
...

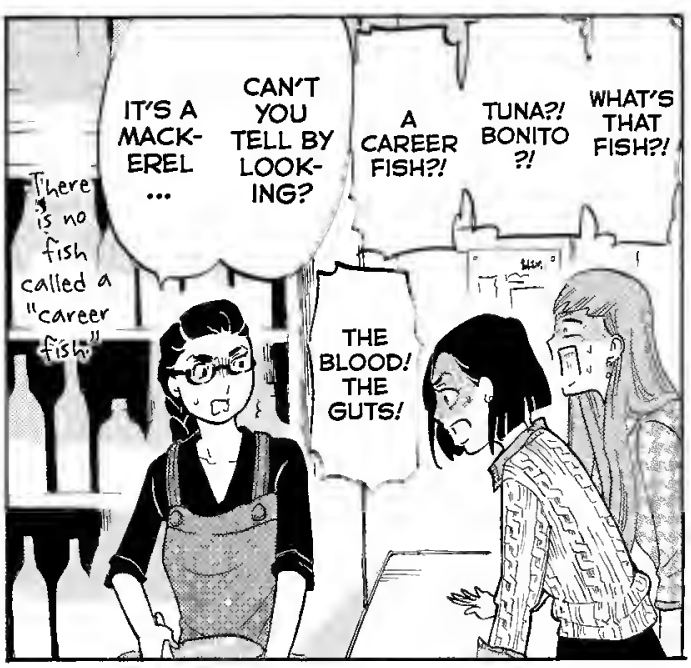

BLUB BLUB BLUB
ドボボボ
WE'RE NOT ACTUALLY OPEN YET...

KAORI... YOU POOR THING... I CAN'T BELIEVE WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU...
STOP IT!
STOP WITH THE PITY!
I GOT OFF EASIER THAN YOU! MY EX JUST GOT A NEW GIRL-FRIEND! THAT'S ALL!


OH, BOOZE, MAKE ME FORGET THE TEARS...
LET US DRINK, POPS...
SO?
ドボボボ BLUB BLUB


ARGH!
YARGH!
IN FACT, ARE YOU SURE THIS DIDN'T HIT YOU HARDER THAN ME?!
NO, YOU'RE IMAGINING THINGS. I'M BETTER OFF THAN YOU, AT LEAST.
HEY, YOU TWO. DON'T FIGHT.
IF WE LET THIS DESTROY OUR FRIENDSHIP TOO, IT'LL TURN INTO A REAL TRAGE...
OH, NEVER MIND.
Us lonely girls have to stick together...
BOO-HOO-HOO!
おーいおいおい
GLOMP
ひしっ

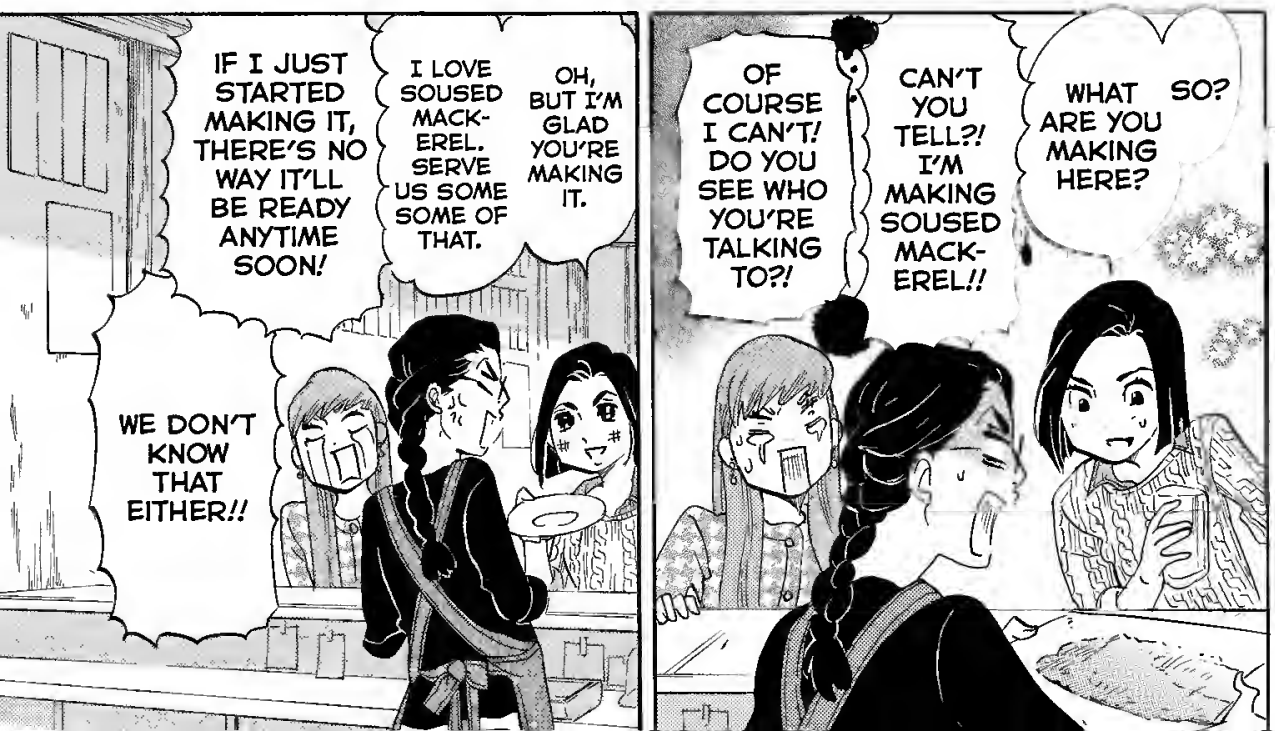
WHY AREN'T YOU CRYING WITH US, KOYUKI?!
YEAH, WHY ARE YOU ACTING SO COLD?! YOU'RE ALWAYS LIKE THIS!!
WELL... I'VE GOT TO GET READY TO OPEN...
DAD HAD TO GO TO THE DOCTOR TODAY FOR HIS CHECK-UP...
...SO I'VE GOTTA DO EVERYTHING MYSELF.


WHAT'S THAT FISH?!
TUNA?! BONITO?!
A CAREER FISH?!
CAN'T YOU TELL BY LOOKING?
IT'S A MACKEREL...
There is no fish called a "career fish."
THE BLOOD! THE GUTS!

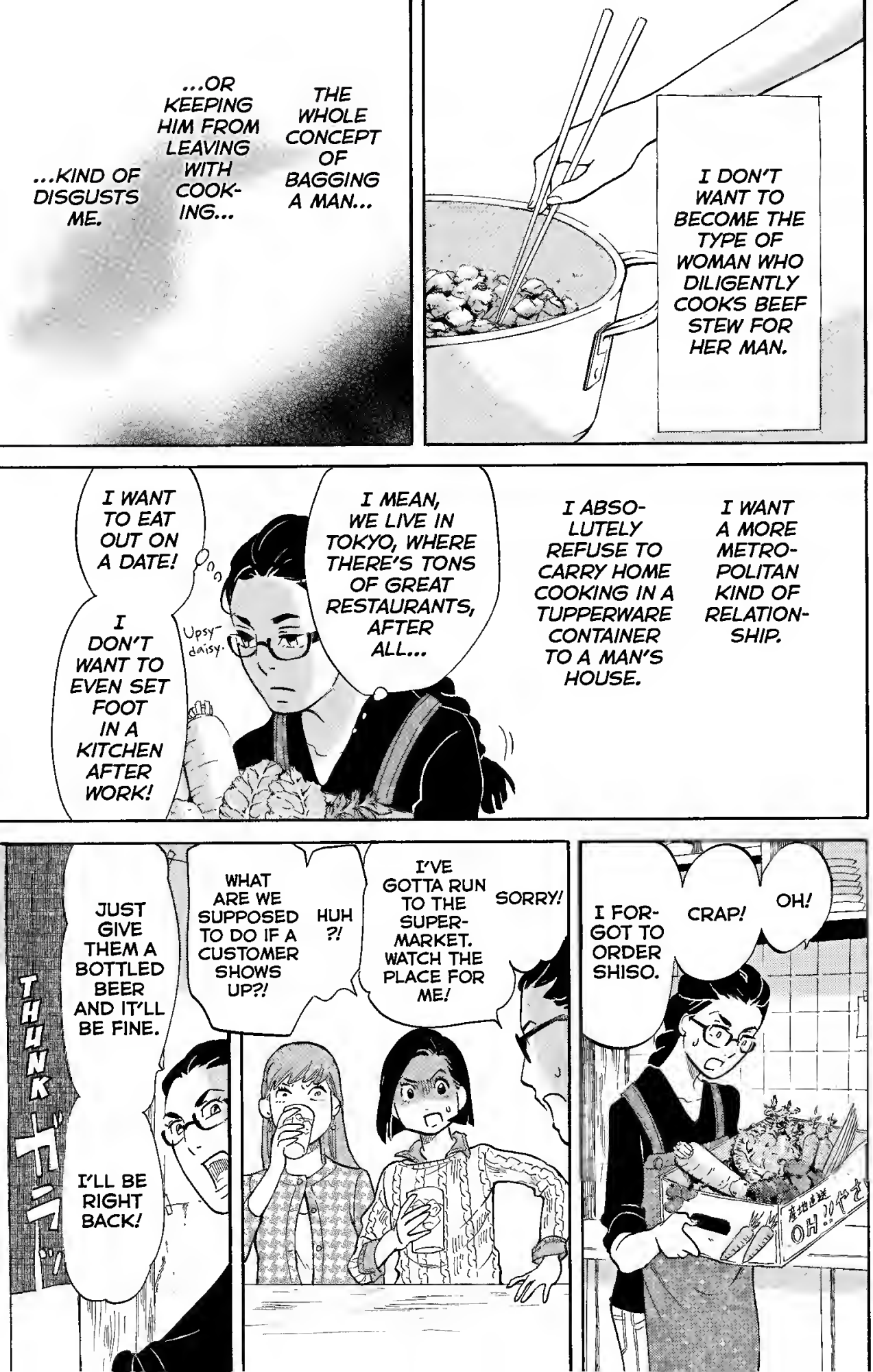
SHUNK
SHUNK
YARGH!
SHE'S BUTCHERING A HUGE FISH!

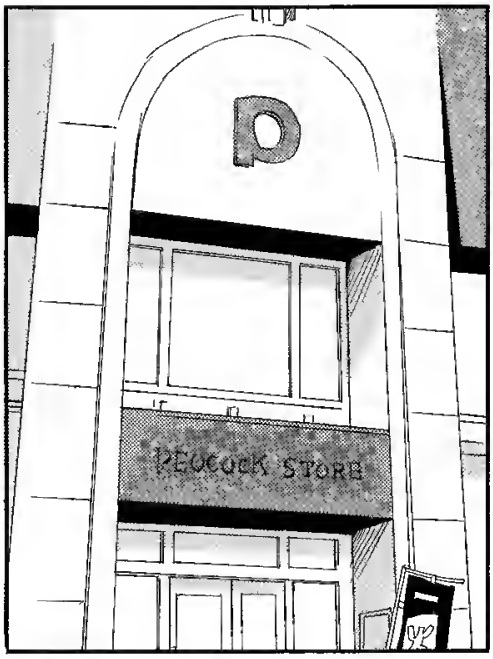
SO YOU TWO ...
...REALLY DON'T EVER COOK, HUH?
HEY, I'M NOT LIKE KAORI! I CAN COOK!
I CAN MAKE PASTA! DON'T LUMP ME IN WITH SOMEONE WHO STILL LIVES AT HOME!
Pasta
BLUSH
THAT DOESN'T COUNT AS COOK-ING!!
WHACK
EEK!

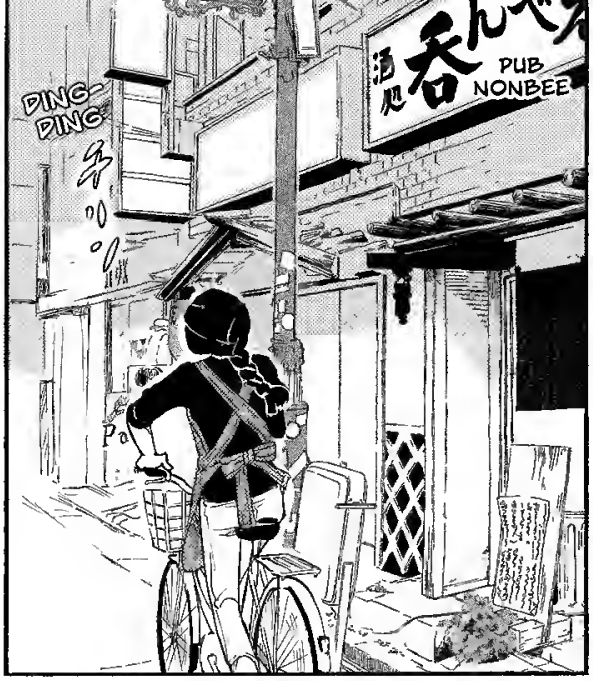
YOU TWO HAVE BEEN SAYING FOR YEARS YOU WANT ME TO TEACH YOU TO COOK...
...BUT WE'RE 33 NOW AND YOU HAVEN'T EVEN TRIED TO LEARN.
I DON'T EVEN THINK I COULD LEARN NOW!


SO? WHAT ARE YOU MAKING HERE?
CAN'T YOU TELL?! I'M MAKING SOUSED MACK-EREL!!
OF COURSE I CAN'T! DO YOU SEE WHO YOU'RE TALKING TO?!
OH, BUT I'M GLAD YOU'RE MAKING IT.
I LOVE SOUSED MACK-EREL. SERVE US SOME SOME OF THAT.
IF I JUST STARTED MAKING IT, THERE'S NO WAY IT'LL BE READY ANYTIME SOON!
WE DON'T KNOW THAT EITHER!!

...BUT HAVE I EVER COOKED FOR A MAN I LIKED?
THEY SAY WOMEN WHO CAN COOK GET ALL THE GUYS...
COME TO THINK OF IT, COOKING FOR A MAN MEANS...
I ALWAYS LOSE INTEREST, AND THE RELATION-SHIP ENDS BEFORE THAT.
THINGS NEVER GET TO THAT POINT.
BUT...
...OR LIVE TOGETHER. OTHERWISE IT CAN'T BE DONE.
...INVITE HIM TO YOURS...
...YOU HAVE TO GO INTO HIS HOUSE AND USE HIS KITCHEN...

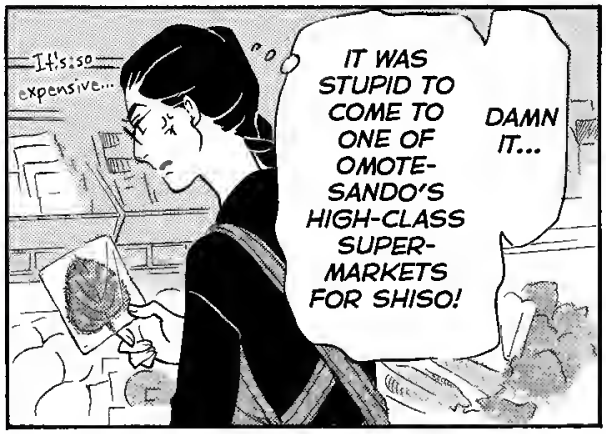

I DON'T WANT TO BECOME THE TYPE OF WOMAN WHO DILIGENTLY COOKS BEEF STEW FOR HER MAN.
I WANT A MORE METRO-POLITAN KIND OF RELATION-SHIP.
I ABSO-LUTELY REFUSE TO CARRY HOME COOKING IN A TUPPERWARE CONTAINER TO A MAN'S HOUSE.
I MEAN, WE LIVE IN TOKYO, WHERE THERE'S TONS OF GREAT RESTAURANTS, AFTER ALL...
I WANT TO EAT OUT ON A DATE!
I DON'T WANT TO EVEN SET FOOT IN A KITCHEN AFTER WORK!
Upsy-daisy.
THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF BAGGING A MAN...
...OR KEEPING HIM FROM LEAVING WITH COOK-ING...
...KIND OF DISGUSTS ME.
OH!
CRAP!
I FOR-GOT TO ORDER SHISO.
SORRY!
I'VE GOTTA RUN TO THE SUPER-MARKET. WATCH THE PLACE FOR ME!
HUH ?!
WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO IF A CUSTOMER SHOWS UP?!
JUST GIVE THEM A BOTTLED BEER AND IT'LL BE FINE.
I'LL BE RIGHT BACK!
THUNK ガラ


P
PEACOCK STORE


DING-DING
PUB NONBEE

SCREAK

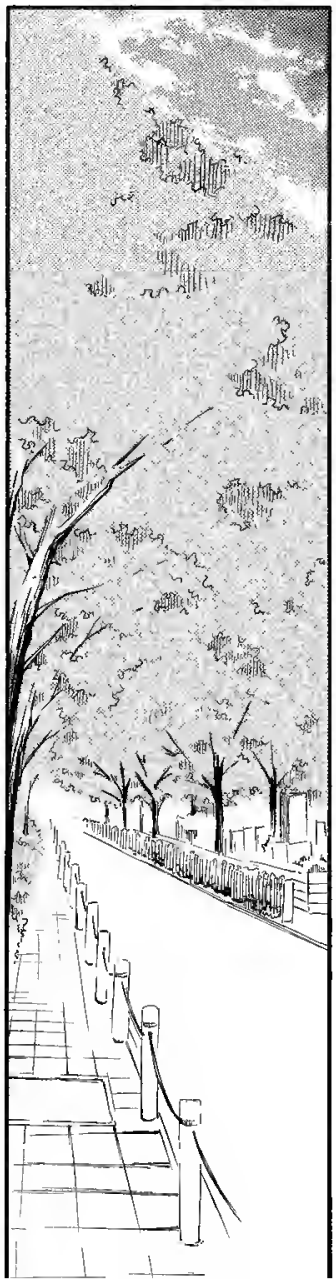
WHOOSH


It's so expensive...
IT WAS STUPID TO COME TO ONE OF OMOTE-SANDO'S HIGH-CLASS SUPER-MARKETS FOR SHISO!
DAMN IT...

HMM?

GAH!
orist
Flower
Thank you, sir. We hope to see you again.
Florist
...FROM A FLORIST...
HE'S BUYING FLOWERS ...
Oh... Man...
HE'S BUY-ING...
... FLOWERS !!
(Said it twice)
...FOR RINKO?
WAIT, COULD THEY BE...
DID HE BUY THOSE FOR A WOMAN?
IS IT A WOMAN ?
Oh jeez! Oh Jeez!
STEP STEP STEP
スタスタスタ

DING DING
チリリン♪
BOOM
ドD
I'M TAILING THIS BASTARD !!
RINKO! KAORI! THE PUB'S IN YOUR HANDS!
MY FRIENDS ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN DAD'S CUSTOMERS!
UGH ...
STEP STEP
スタ スタ
STEP
スタ
SO THEY'RE NOT FOR RINKO?!
HEY, HE'S WALKING IN THE EXACT OPPOSITE DIRECTION FROM OUR PUB!



RUSTLE

STEP STEP
スタ スタ
A-AOYAMA CEMETERY?
CREAK

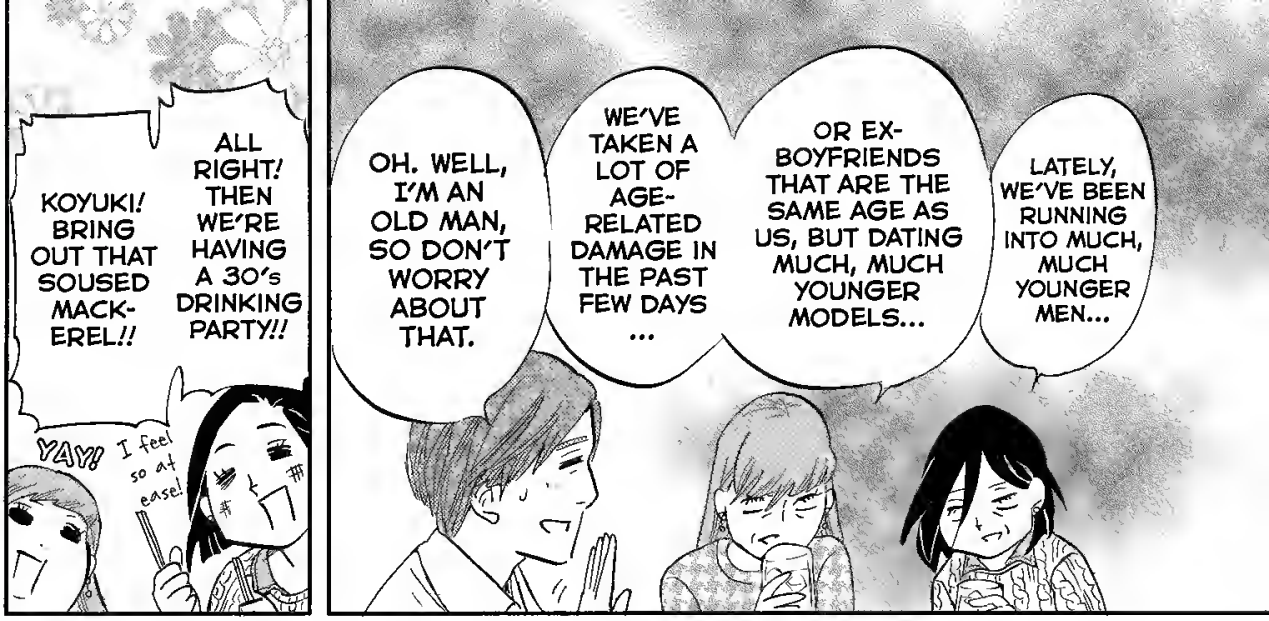
OH... HE'S JUST VISITING A GRAVE...
AND I WAS SURE HE WAS GOING ON A DATE WITH ONE OF THOSE MODELS...
THAT'S VERY COMMEND-ABLE FOR A YOUNG GUY LIKE HIM...
GOOD KID. GOOD KID...
THUNK
ガラ
I'M BACK!
SORRY IT TOOK SO LONG!
HUFF HUFF
酒処
PUB
OH!
GOOD. NO ONE'S HERE YE—

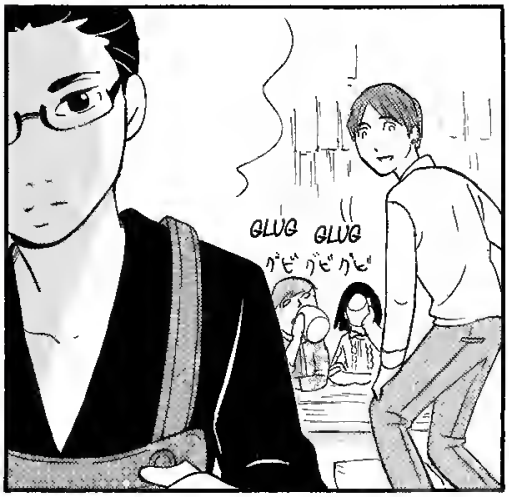
EMPTY
ガラ～ン
WHOA!! NO ONE'S HERE AT ALL!! WHERE THE HELL ARE RINKO AND KAORI?!?!
WHERE'D THEY RUN OFF TO?!
THEY KNOW BETTER THAN TO LEAVE THE PLACE EMP—
!
FWAP
HUH?!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
HUH?!
OH!
KOYUKI'S BACK!
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP

WE FOUND A MAN!!
IT'S GONNA BE OKAY NOW, KOYUKI !!
YAAAAARGH!!
A HUGE ONE!! RIGHT UNDER OUR FEET!!
THERE WAS A COCK-ROACH IN THE PUB!!
NO, STUPID !!
Are you that starved for male attention?!
WAIT... YOU'RE FINALLY RESORTING TO KIDNAP-PING MEN OFF THE STREET?!

THAT'S THE REASON YOU GRABBED THIS GUY?
HUH ?!
GO AHEAD, MISTER! TAKE CARE OF IT!
HURRY! HURRY UP AND DO SOME-THING!
DO SOME-THII-ING!!
GRAB
OH.
ALL RIGHT, THEN...
DO YOU HAVE ANY BUG SPRAY?
That I could use...
WAHHHH
NO, THAT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M REALLY SORRY THEY BOTH-ERED YOU.
CHRIST. WHAT'RE YOU PANICKING ABOUT? THIS IS A RESTAURANT DISTRICT, SO OF COURSE THERE'S GOING TO BE A FEW COCK-ROACHES.
They slip in from out-side.
THUNK
SO WHERE IS IT? WHERE'D YOU SEE IT?
HUH ?!
KOYUKI, YOU'RE NOT PLAN-NING TO—
OH. THERE IT IS.
FWIP
HUH ?! AN UM-BRELLA ?!
WOOSH
WHAM WHAM
RUSTLE
FWIP
TOSS
EEEEEK!
ALL DONE.
CLAP
うおおお WHOOOAAA
THAT WAS SO AWE-SOME, KOYUKI !!

GO AHEAD! EVERY-THING THEY SERVE HERE IS GREAT!
THAT'S RIGHT! THERE'S USU-ALLY NO ROACH-ES HERE!
IF THERE WERE, WE SURE WOULDN'T BE!
HUH ?!
I'M VERY SORRY FOR THE TROUBLE, SIR.
HAVE A BEER ON THE HOUSE.
CLINK
CHEERS!
HAND-MADE!
THEY'VE GOT SOME GREAT SOUSED MACKEREL TODAY!
YEEGH
WELL, MAYBE JUST ONE ...
OH ...
OH! THAT'S THE SPIRIT, MISTER!
BLUSH
WOO-HOO!! AN OLDER MAN!!
I'M... 35.
HUH?!
HOW OLD ARE YOU, PAL?
SO?


ALL RIGHT! THEN WE'RE HAVING A 30's DRINKING PARTY!!
KOYUKI! BRING OUT THAT SOUSED MACK-EREL!!
YAY!
I feel so at ease!
OH. WELL, I'M AN OLD MAN, SO DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT.
WE'VE TAKEN A LOT OF AGE-RELATED DAMAGE IN THE PAST FEW DAYS ...
OR EX-BOYFRIENDS THAT ARE THE SAME AGE AS US, BUT DATING MUCH, MUCH YOUNGER MODELS...
LATELY, WE'VE BEEN RUNNING INTO MUCH, MUCH YOUNGER MEN...


GLUG GLUG
ガビ ガビ ガビ

GLUB
ぐつぐつ
GLUB

I TOLD YOU, IT'S NOT DONE YET.
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME STEWED BEEF TENDON IN THE MEAN-TIME, SO MAKE DO WITH THAT!

THAT LOOKS DELICIOUS.

WOW...

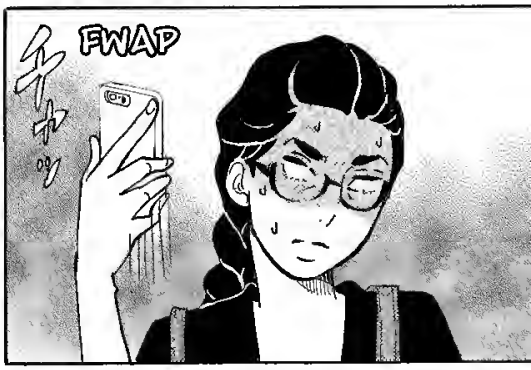
CAN I TRY THIS ODEN?
RATTLE RATTLE ガラ
STEP STEP スタ スタ
プイ TURN
HUH ?!

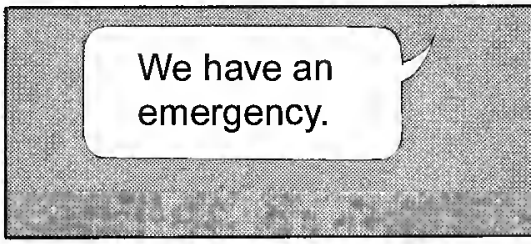
HE'S MY TYPE...
NOW THAT I'VE GOTTEN A GOOD LOOK AT HIM, HIS FACE AND PERSONALITY ARE JUST... BINGO! RIGHT IN MY STRIKE ZONE! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? IS THIS REALLY HAPPEN-ING? HUH? IS THIS REALLY HAPPENING?

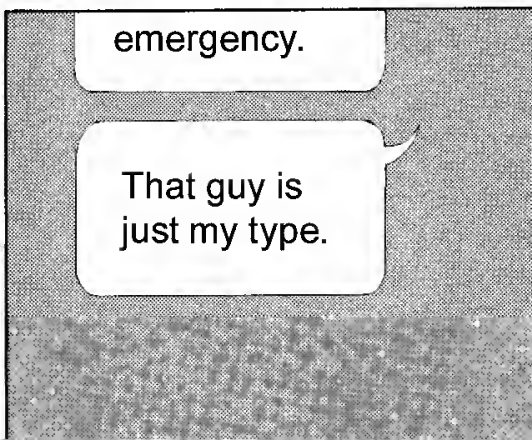
HERE'S YOUR ODEN.
SHWIP SHWIP
PARDON THE DELAY.
THMP
FWAP
RUB RUB
RATTLE RATTLE
...JUST GETTING RUSTY... THAT'S ALL...
MAN, IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE BEEN IN A RELATIONSHIP THAT MY EYES ARE...YOU KNOW...
THIS ISN'T A BIG DEAL. IT'S NOT A BIG DEAL...
CALM DOWN, KOYUKI. CALM DOWN.
NO ...
HE'S JUST A REGULAR, EVERYDAY SALARYMAN LIKE YOU FIND ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY ...
SHAKE
SHAKE
FWAP
TH-
THIS IS TASTY!
WOW!
IT LOOKS DELICIOUS.
THANK YOU!
SNAP
Don't look... Don't look at him!
THUNK
RATTLE RATTLE
STEP STEP
TURN
HUFF HUFF

THE WAY HE CALLED IT "TASTY," THE WAY HE STARTED HIS ODEN WITH THE HARD-BOILED EGG... HE'S ABSOLUTELY MY TYPE!!
BOOM

MUNCH MUNCH


FWAP

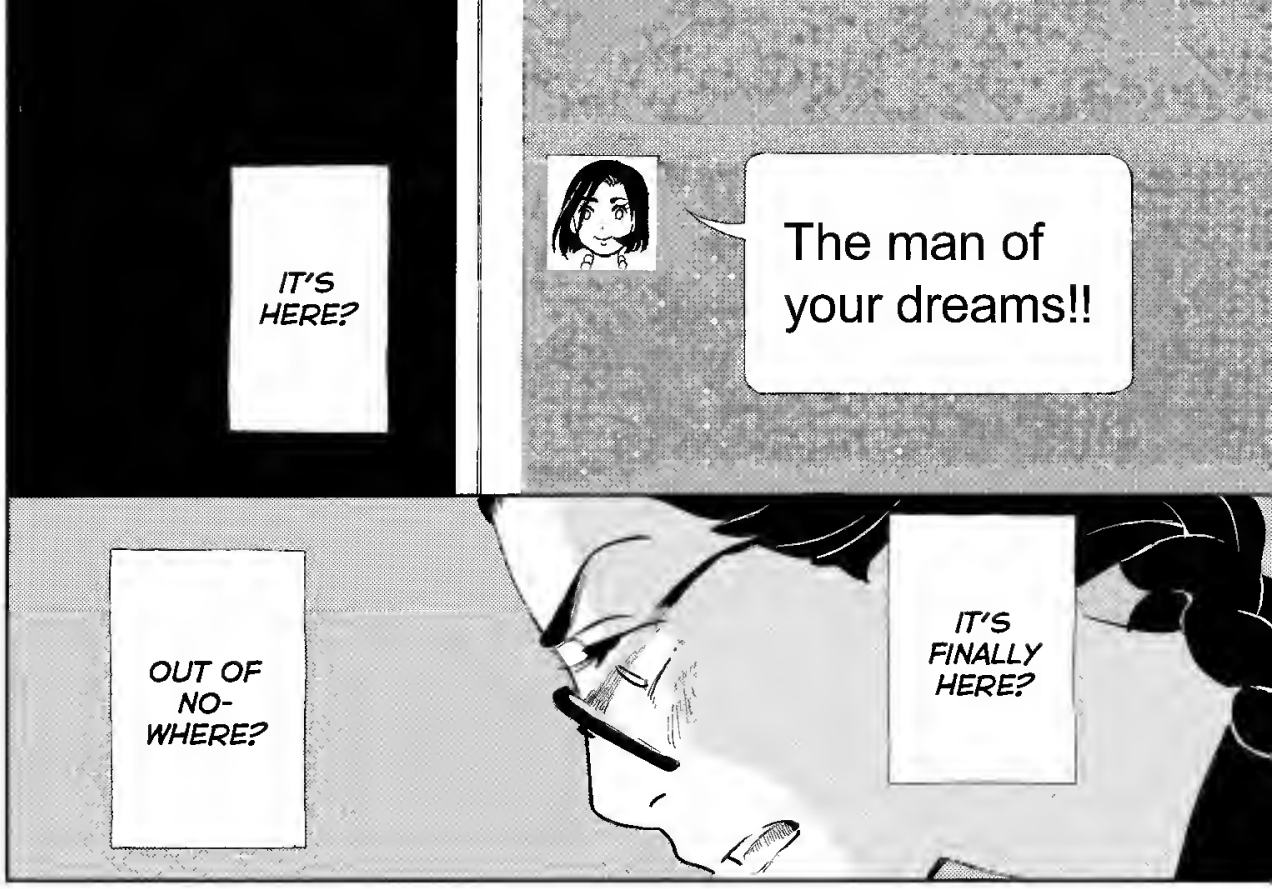

We have an emergency.

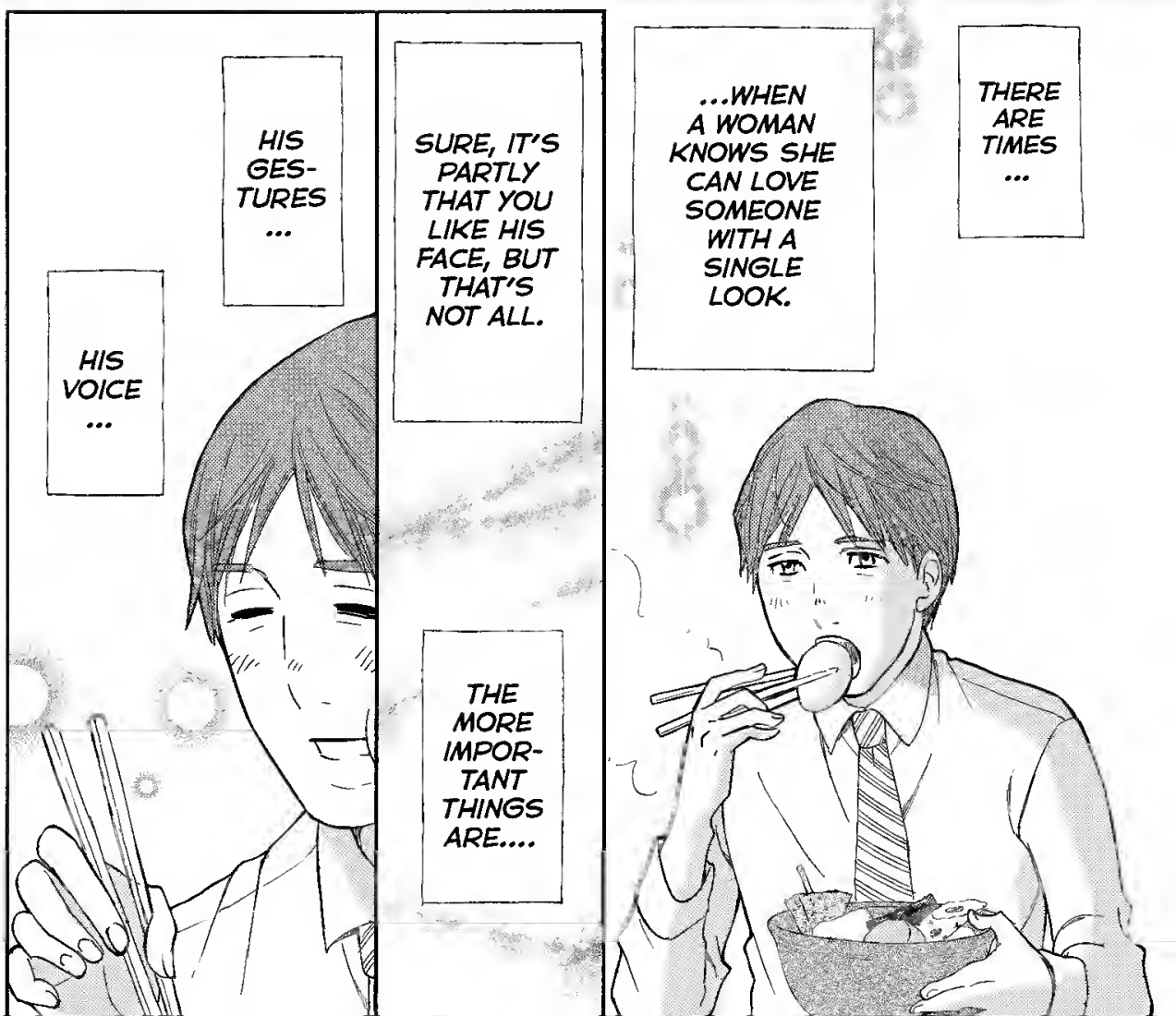

emergency.
That guy is just my type.

FWOOSH
I need five minutes to apply foundation, mascara, and gloss, so don't let him leave until I get back!!
ZOOM
W-W-W-What should we do?
Give us your orders!
FOR NOW ...
TAKE YOUR TIME TODAY.
YEAH ...
OH.
WE'RE BUYING TODAY, MISTER! SO YOU CAN STAY LONGER, CAN'T YOU?
WE'LL MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A GOOD TIME.
SCREAK
GRAB
WHOA!
OH.
SO HER NAME IS KOYUKI?
THAT...
SHE JUST PERFECTLY BUTCHERED THIS HUGE... MACKEREL? TO MAKE IT!! JUST NOW!!
THE WOMAN WHO JUST LEFT!! HER NAME'S KOYUKI!!
OH.
I LOVE IT.
HEY, I KNOW! LET'S DRINK UNTIL THE SOUSED MACKEREL IS READY!
DO YOU LIKE SOUSED MACK-EREL?

H-
GOR-GEOUS WOMAN FROM BEFORE?
AHA-HA!
EHE-HEH!
HE CALLED HER GOR-GEOUS!!
H-
Ha ha ha
I... ...ADMIRE CAPABLE WOMEN LIKE THAT...
HUH? WELL, SHE HAS SUCH LOVELY, PALE SKIN AND NICE, DARK HAIR...
SHE'S GOT THAT CLASSIC JAPANESE BEAUTY, I GUESS...
WHAT PART OF HER IS GOR-GEOUS ?!
W-W-W-W-WHAT PART?!

JINGA-LING
ピロリン
CHACK
チャッ
FWAP
キリッ
HE SAID CAPABLE WOMEN ARE HIS TYPE!!
JINGA-LING
ピロン
I'VE GOT A SHOT AT WHAT?!
WHAT'S THAT MEAN?!
THE SAME TEXT AT THE SAME TIME?!
HOW HAVE I GOT A SHOT?!
ON THE 2ND FLOOR
Koyuki!!!! You've got a shot!!!!
Koyuki!!!! You've got a shot!!!!
EEK!
It's here.
This is it.
Finally.
He says you're gorgeous!!
He said you're his type!!

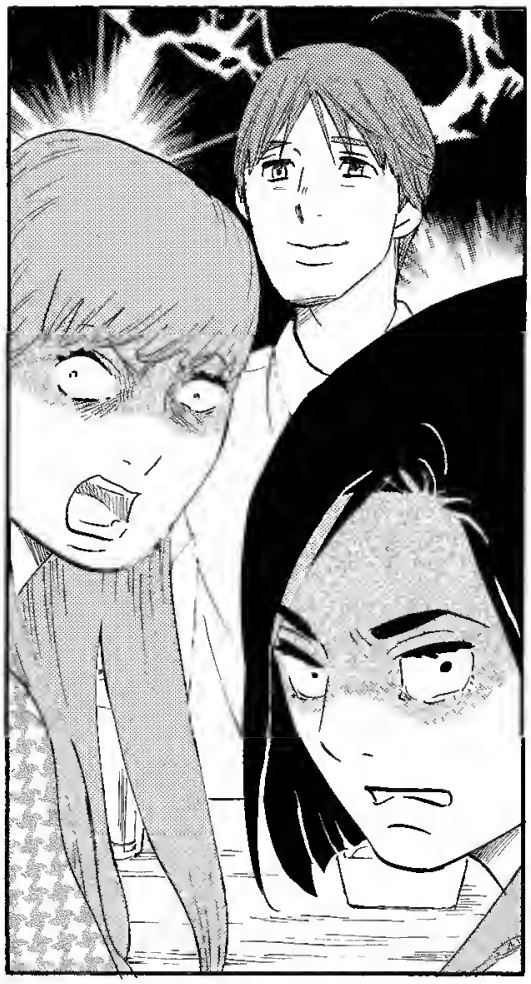

IT'S HERE?
The man of your dreams!!
OUT OF NO-WHERE?
IT'S FINALLY HERE?


HIS GES-TURES ...
SURE, IT'S PARTLY THAT YOU LIKE HIS FACE, BUT THAT'S NOT ALL.
...WHEN A WOMAN KNOWS SHE CAN LOVE SOMEONE WITH A SINGLE LOOK.
THERE ARE TIMES ...
HIS VOICE ...
THE MORE IMPOR-TANT THINGS ARE....

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN ALL THOSE THINGS GRAB YOU IN AN INSTANT.
THE ATMO-SPHERE HE GIVES OFF...
HIS BEARING ...
THE WAY HE TALKS ...
HELL, I'VE EVEN HAD THEM WITH OTHER WOMEN.
I'VE HAD MOMENTS LIKE THAT WHEN I SAW AN ACTOR ON TV.
SHING
HIS TYPE TOO!!
SAYS I'M!!
PLUS, THIS GUY!!
DD//
ばしゃ
FWAP
...NEVER REALLY IN PERSON, WITH MEN OF MAR-RIAGEABLE AGE.
BUT...

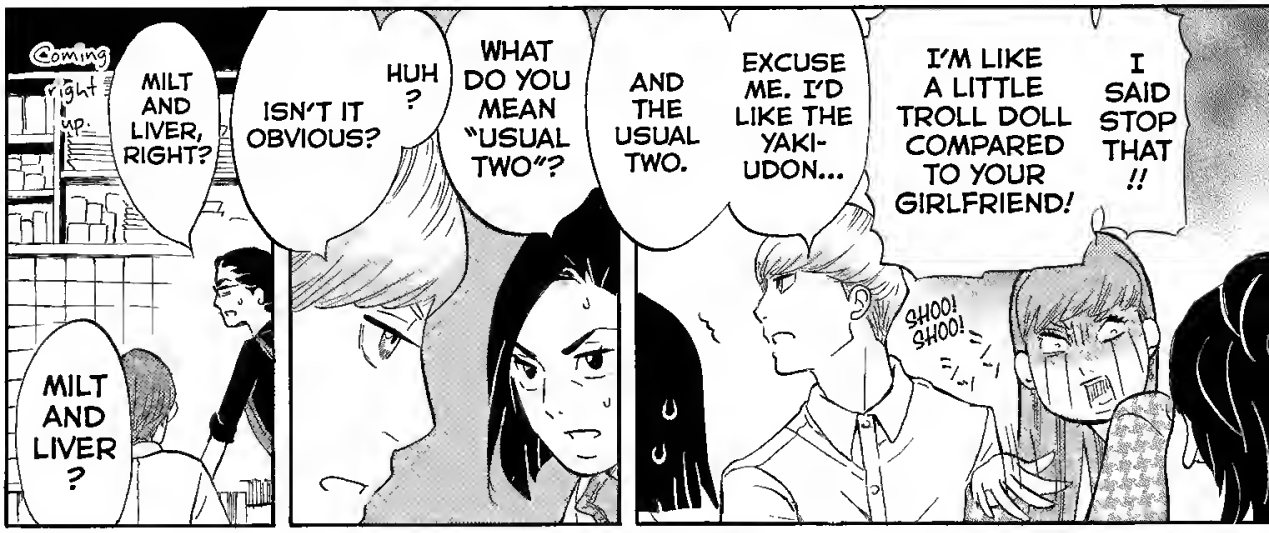
I'M NOT LIKE THOSE OTHER TWO!!
I WANNA GO OUT WITH A NORMAL MAN, EVEN IF HE'S A LITTLE PLAIN!!
AND ACHIEVE SOME PERFECTLY NORMAL HAPPINESS!!
STOMP STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
AND HE'S NOT A MODEL OR A MUSICIAN !!
JUST A NORMAL, AVERAGE SALARY-MAN!! OLDER THAN ME!! 35!!
WHAM
THE REALITY LINE!!
THINK!!
COME BACK, KOYUKI !! EEEK !!
SHE'S COMING!!
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
STOMP
FWIP
FWAP
PARDON THE DELAY.

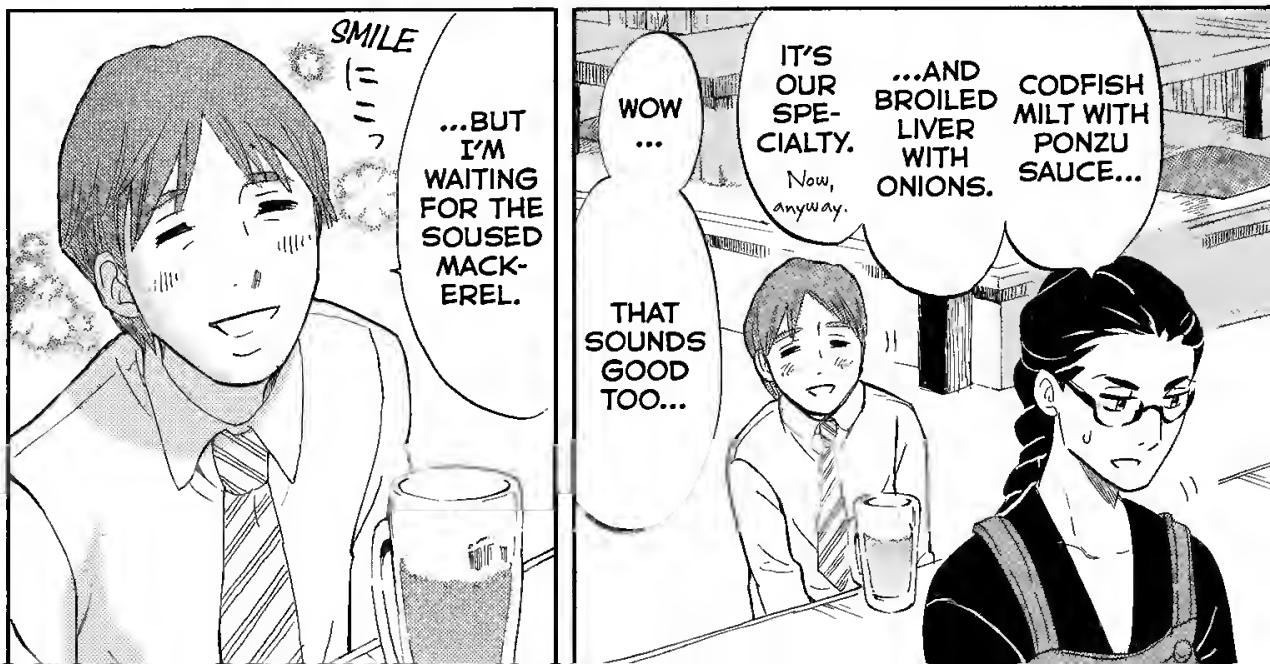
KAORI! YOU'RE HERE!!
AH!!
THE PLACE IS DE-SERTED TODAY.
HUH?



WITH THIS MANY PEOPLE, WE COULD POLISH OFF A WHOLE ORDER OF YAKI-UDON WITH EASE...
STOP IT! DON'T TOUCH ME!
CHEERS!!
YAY, KAORI!

HEY... WHY ARE...
...you here?
WHO CARES?
IT'S NOT LIKE IT'S YOUR PUB.
RYO SAID HE WANTED TO COME.
KAORI ...
I THINK... YOU'VE GOTTEN PRETTIER THAN YOU USED TO BE.

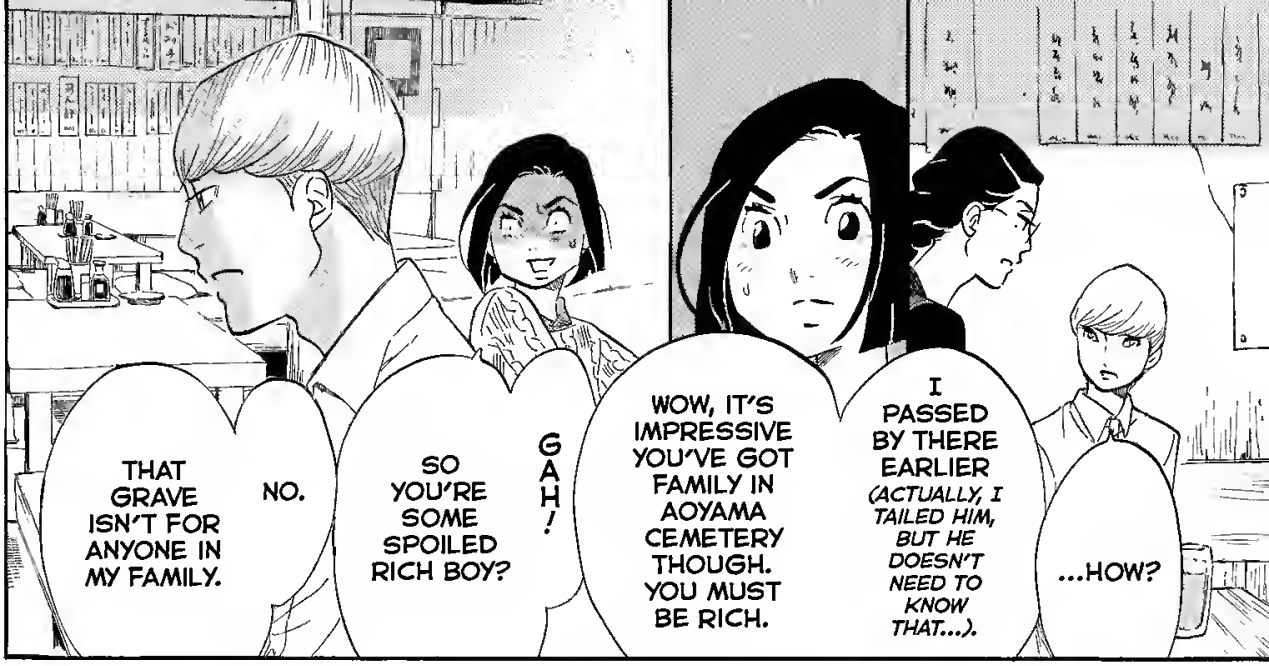

I SAID STOP THAT !!
I'M LIKE A LITTLE TROLL DOLL COMPARED TO YOUR GIRLFRIEND!
EXCUSE ME. I'D LIKE THE YAKI-UDON...
AND THE USUAL TWO.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN "USUAL TWO"?
HUH ?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
MILT AND LIVER, RIGHT?
coming right up.
MILT AND LIVER ?
SHOO! SHOO!

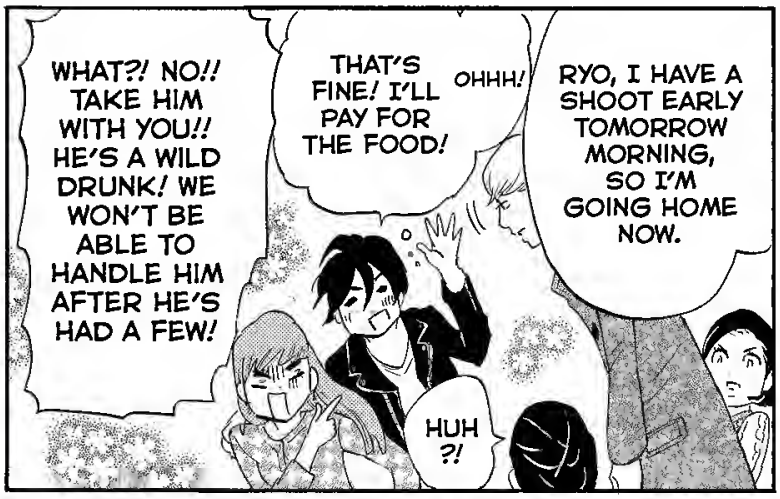

CODFISH MILT WITH PONZU SAUCE...
...AND BROILED LIVER WITH ONIONS.
IT'S OUR SPE-CIALTY.
Now, anyway.
WOW ...
THAT SOUNDS GOOD TOO...
...BUT I'M WAITING FOR THE SOUSED MACK-EREL.
SMILE

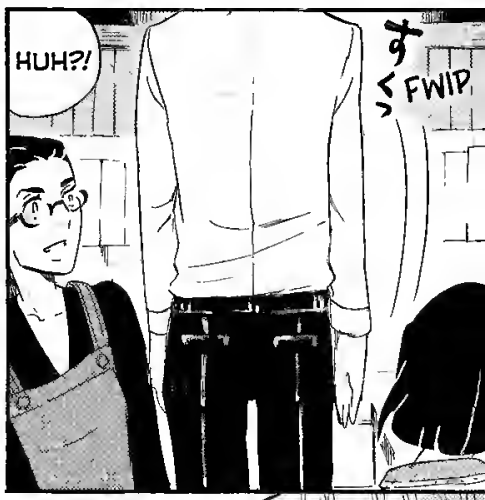
A 35 YEAR OLD SAYING "HURRAY" ?!
INTER-NAL VOICE
HE SAID "HURRAY !"
DAMN IT, THAT'S ADOR-ABLE!
THE CUTE LITTLE BASTARD!!
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER IT WILL TASTE GOOD OR NOT THOUGH.
TA-DAH
どん
HERE YOU ARE.
OH!
HURRAY!
INTER-NAL VOICE
HE'S ADOR-ABLE!
OH, IT'S READY NOW.
COOLY
...
I CAN'T FIGHT IT.
KOYUKI ...
だん だん WHAM WHAM
IT'S ...
... SOOO YUMMY!
I'VE GOT A WEAKNESS FOR MEN LIKE THIS.
DO YOU MIND IF I COME HERE FOR DINNER TOMORROW AS WELL?

DO YOU MIND ...
...IF I ASK YOUR NAME?
HE'S AN ADULT, BUT STILL INNOCENT.
I'M YOSHIO.
YOSHIO MARUI.
HE'S POLITE, BUT STILL WARM.
SMILE
A CUTE MAN WHO JUST BEGS TO BE SPOILED.
THEN I'LL SAVE THAT SEAT FOR YOU TOMOR-ROW...
...MR. MARUI.
IF YOU START TALKING LIKE THAT, I'M GOING TO BE HERE...
...EVERY DAY.
THAT'S PERFECT-LY FINE.
I'LL KEEP THAT SEAT RESERVED FOR YOU.
THIS FEELS LIKE THE BEGINNING OF A NEW LOVE.

BUT DON'T LET YOURSELF GET EXCITED.
I'VE GOT TO STAY CALM...
...AND ALOOF ...
...UNTIL HE COMPLETELY FALLS IN LOVE WITH ME.
I'VE GOT TO PLAY THIS DRY AND OPEN.
THAT'S A GROWN WOMAN'S PATH TO VICTORY.
YOUR SOUSED MACKEREL IS READY TOO.
OH.
THAT'S RIGHT!
HEY, YOU!
I SAW YOU VISITING A GRAVE AT AOYAMA CEMETERY TODAY.
THAT'S VERY ADMIRABLE IN A YOUNG MAN.
Here's your order.
TWITCH ピク


I PASSED BY THERE EARLIER (ACTUALLY, I TAILED HIM, BUT HE DOESN'T NEED TO KNOW THAT...).
...HOW?
WOW, IT'S IMPRESSIVE YOU'VE GOT FAMILY IN AOYAMA CEMETERY THOUGH. YOU MUST BE RICH.
GAH!
SO YOU'RE SOME SPOILED RICH BOY?
NO.
THAT GRAVE ISN'T FOR ANYONE IN MY FAMILY.

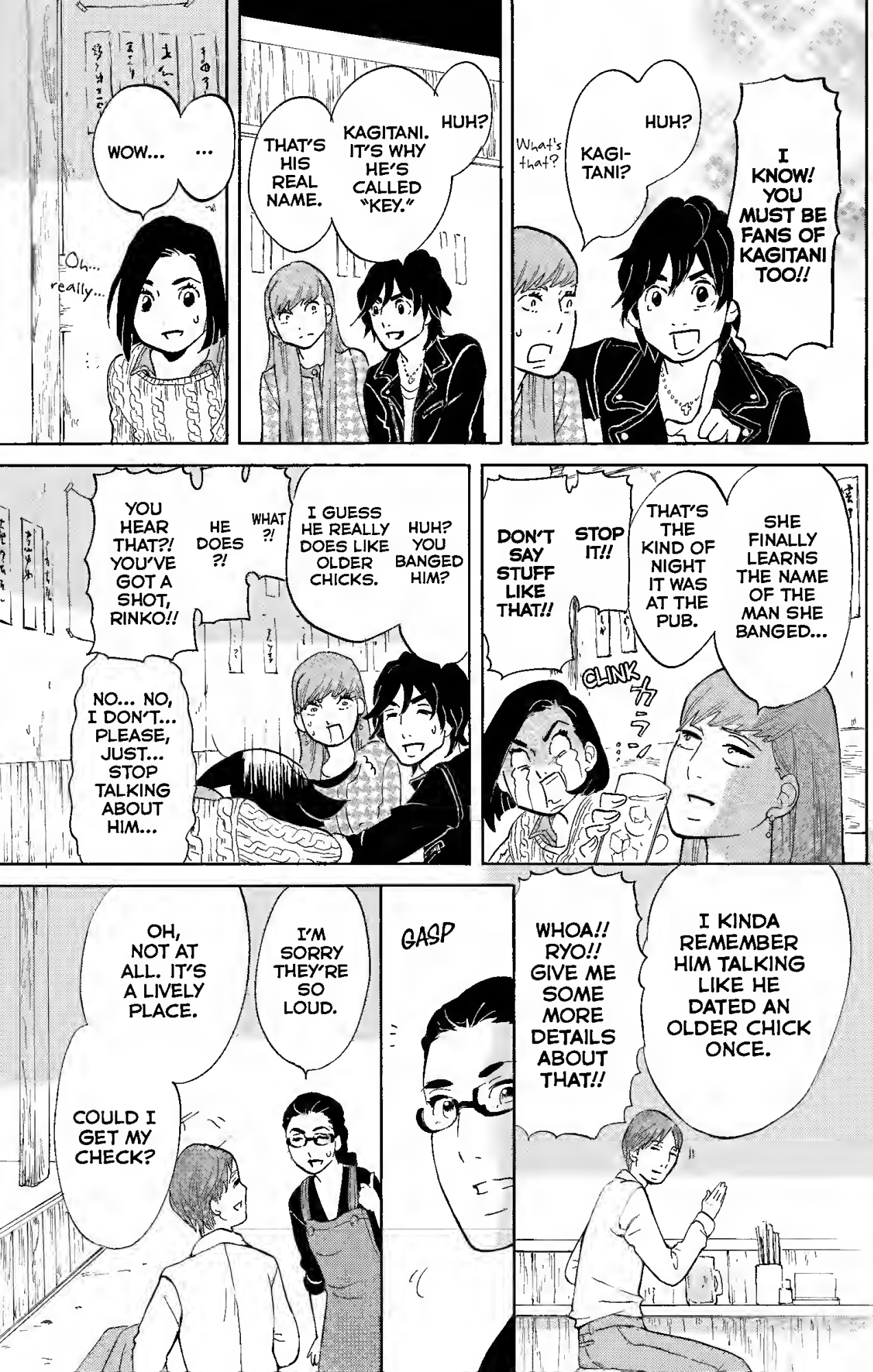

RYO, I HAVE A SHOOT EARLY TOMORROW MORNING, SO I'M GOING HOME NOW.
OHHH!
THAT'S FINE! I'LL PAY FOR THE FOOD!
HUH ?!
WHAT?! NO!! TAKE HIM WITH YOU!! HE'S A WILD DRUNK! WE WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE HIM AFTER HE'S HAD A FEW!


HUH?!
すっ
FWIP

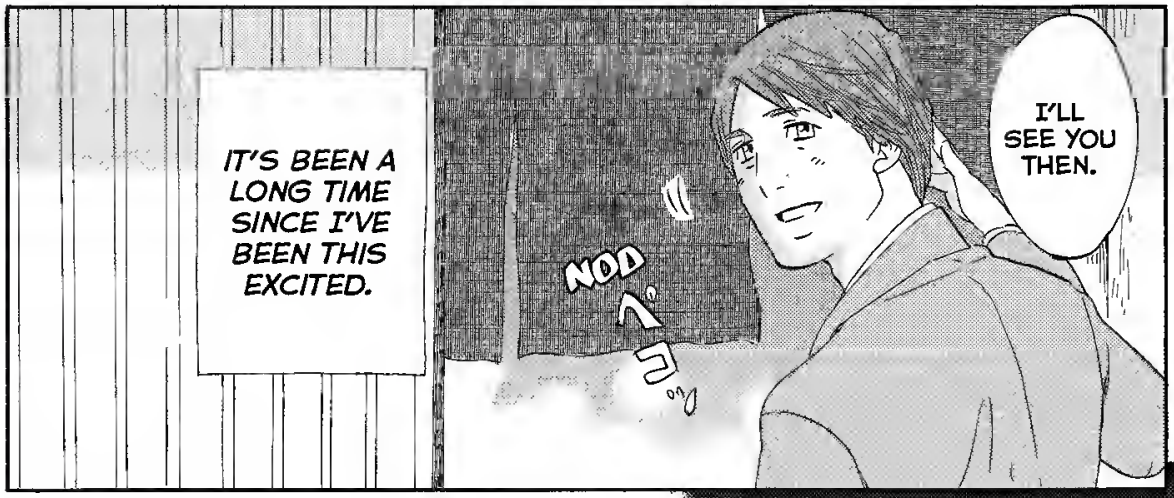
AHHH, YOU TWO LOOK SO LONELY!
WHY SHOULD HE BE MAD? I ONLY SAW HIM VISITING A GRAVE...
...IS HE MAD?
What is he a little kid?!

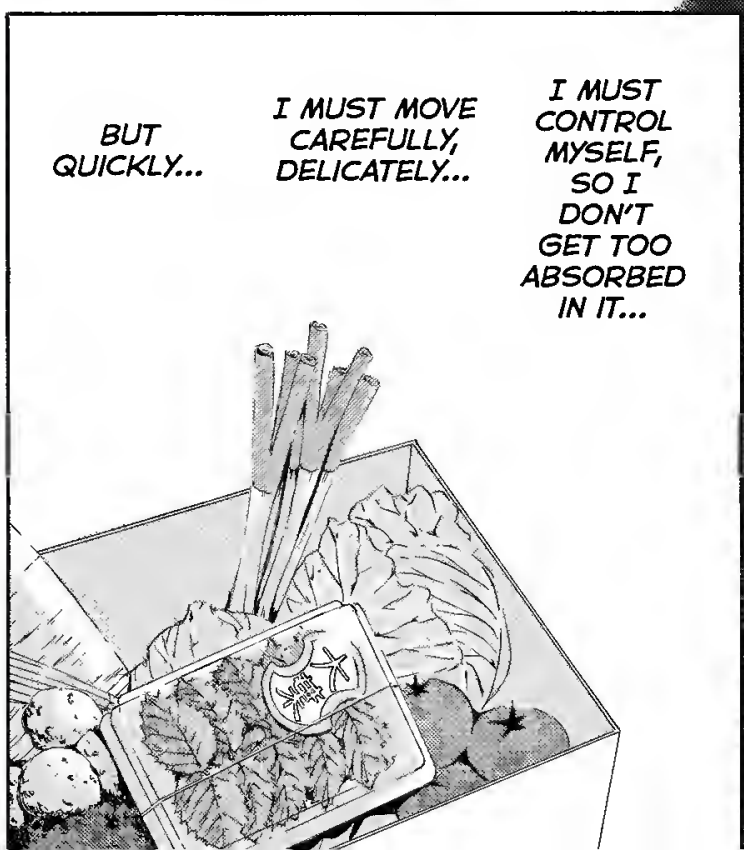
THUNK
ガラ
スタスタスタ
STEP STEP STEP

プシ
TURN


WOW... ...
Oh... really...
KAGITANI. IT'S WHY HE'S CALLED "KEY."
THAT'S HIS REAL NAME.
HUH?
What's that?
KAGI-TANI?
HUH?
I KNOW! YOU MUST BE FANS OF KAGITANI TOO!!
YOU HEAR THAT?! YOU'VE GOT A SHOT, RINKO!!
HE DOES?!
WHAT?!
I GUESS HE REALLY DOES LIKE OLDER CHICKS.
HUH? YOU BANGED HIM?
NO... NO, I DON'T... PLEASE, JUST... STOP TALKING ABOUT HIM...
DON'T SAY STUFF LIKE THAT!!
STOP IT!!
THAT'S THE KIND OF NIGHT IT WAS AT THE PUB.
SHE FINALLY LEARNS THE NAME OF THE MAN SHE BANGED...
CLINK
カラン
OH, NOT AT ALL. IT'S A LIVELY PLACE.
I'M SORRY THEY'RE SO LOUD.
COULD I GET MY CHECK?
GASP
WHOA!! RYO!! GIVE ME SOME MORE DETAILS ABOUT THAT!!
I KINDA REMEMBER HIM TALKING LIKE HE DATED AN OLDER CHICK ONCE.

WELL, I'M STILL PUTTING THE DRINKS ON THE HOUSE...
PLEASE DON'T.
INSTEAD, JUST BE SURE TO RESERVE THIS SEAT FOR ME TOMOR-ROW.
THAT WILL BE PLENTY.
OH NO! I COULDN'T EAT AND DRINK ALL THIS AND NOT PAY!
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. THIS WAS AN APOLOGY, AFTER ALL...

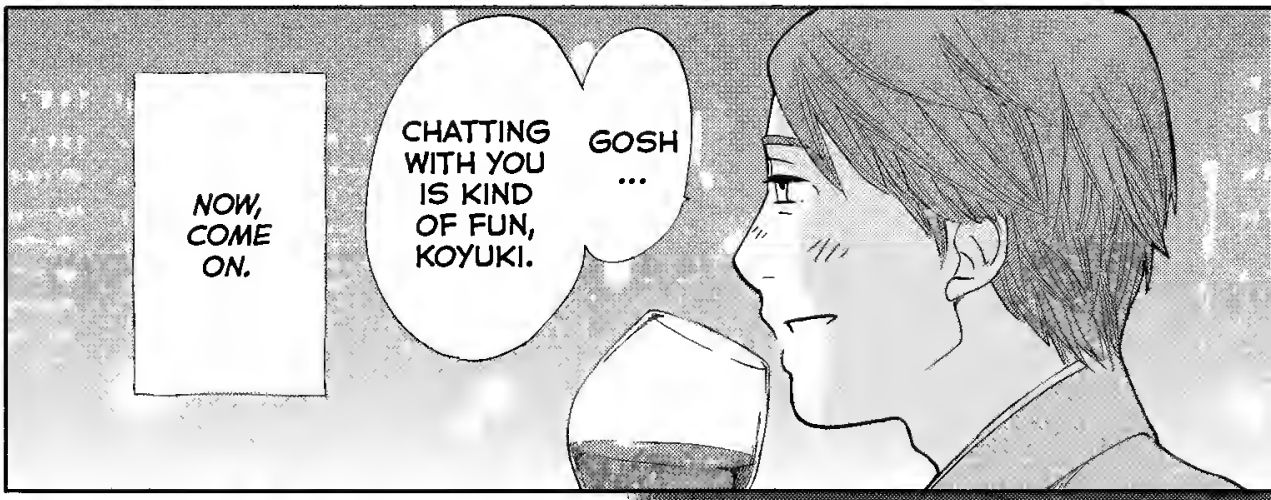

IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE BEEN THIS EXCITED.
NOD
I'LL SEE YOU THEN.


BUT QUICKLY...
I MUST MOVE CAREFULLY, DELICATELY...
I MUST CONTROL MYSELF, SO I DON'T GET TOO ABSORBED IN IT...

BUT IT'S NOT LIKE IT WAS WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.

I CAN'T FAIL HERE.
BUT I DON'T WANT TO HESITATE.
I DON'T WANT TO RUSH INTO THINGS AND FAIL.
BECAUSE WE DON'T HAVE TIME LEFT.
WHEN DO YOU USUALLY GET OFF WORK, KOYUKI?
SURE.
LET'S GO OUT FOR DRINKS.
SEE?

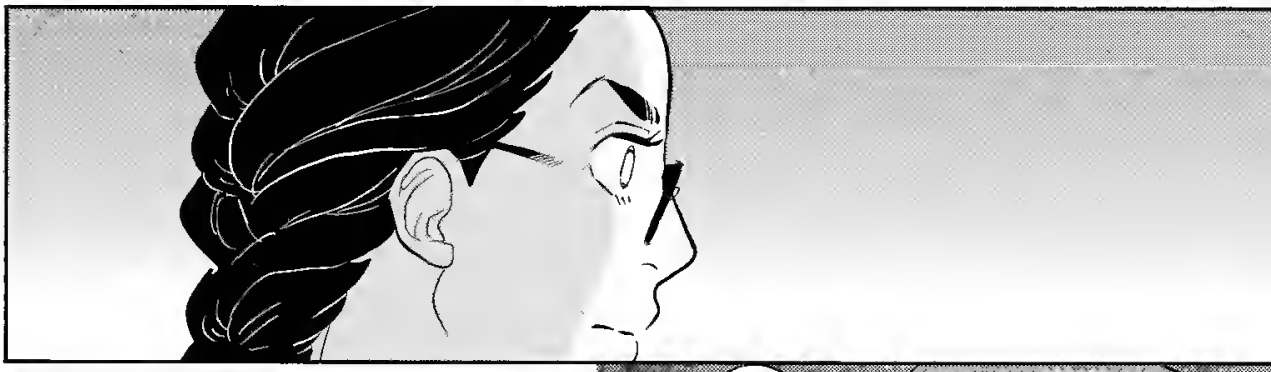
ADULT RELATIONSHIPS MOVE FAST.
ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU DRINK.
IT'S LIKE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT NOTHING IN PARTICULAR ...
SO YOU MOVE FORWARD RELIABLY, ONE SQUARE AT A TIME.


GOSH ...
CHATTING WITH YOU IS KIND OF FUN, KOYUKI.
NOW, COME ON.

I'M HAVING FUN TALKING WITH YOU TOO, MR. MARUI.
COME TO ME!
WAIT. AHHH, THAT FACE.
HIS PROFILE MAKES HIM LOOK LIKE A COMBINATION OF AN ADULT AND A CHILD.

CAN WE MEET ALONE AGAIN SOME-TIME?
KOYU-KI...
I CAN'T FIGHT IT...
HE'S TOTALLY MY TYPE...
BA-DUMP
ドキン
...I THOUGHT YOU WERE BEAUTI-FUL.
...SAW YOU COOKING TODAY...
WHEN I...
...
OF COURSE ...
...
SURE IT IS.
...IF THIS TURNS INTO ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS?
THEN, IS IT ALL RIGHT ...
...
ACTU-ALLY...
...I LIKE YOUR FACE TOO.
A LOT.

I'M MARRIED. DO YOU MIND?

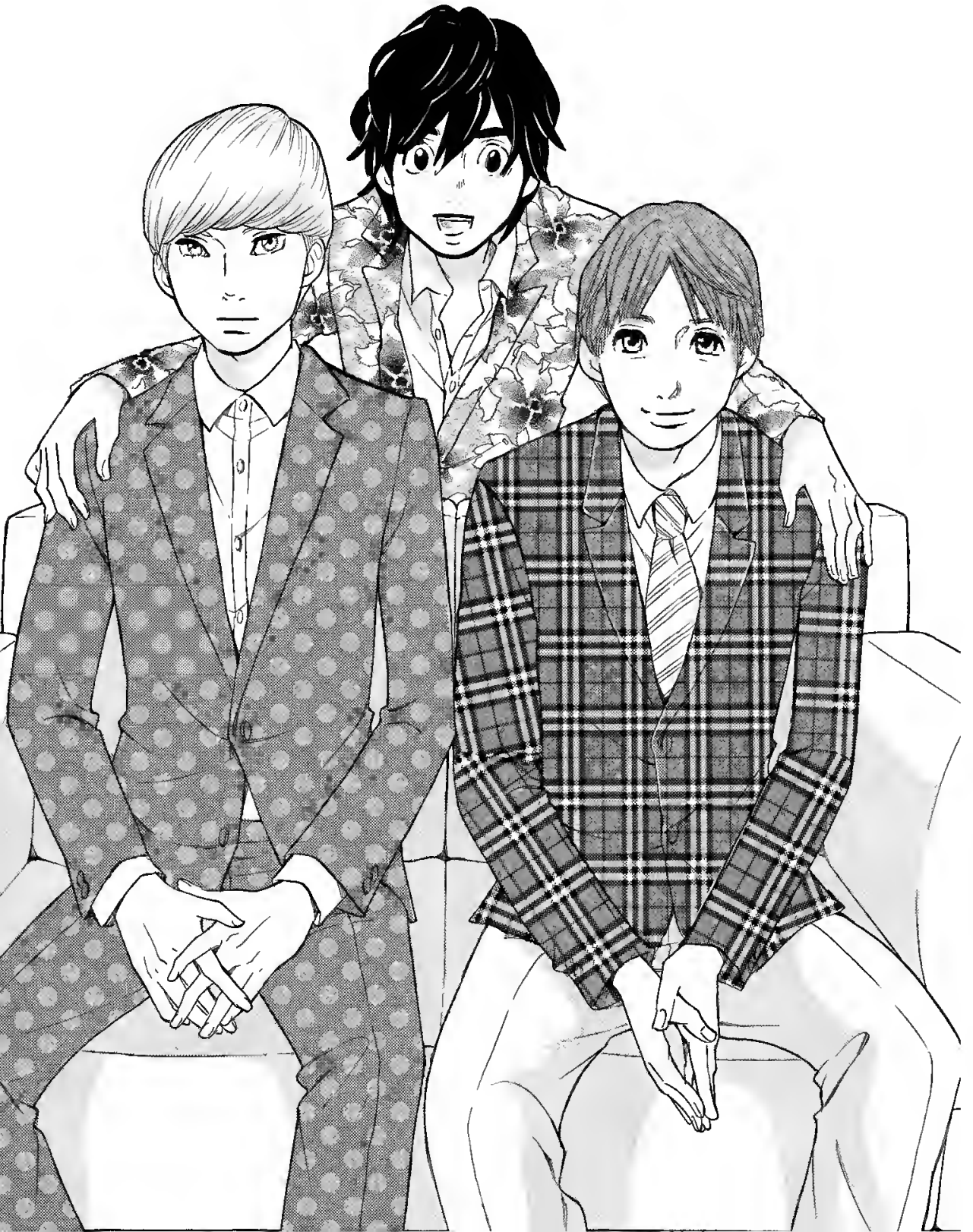


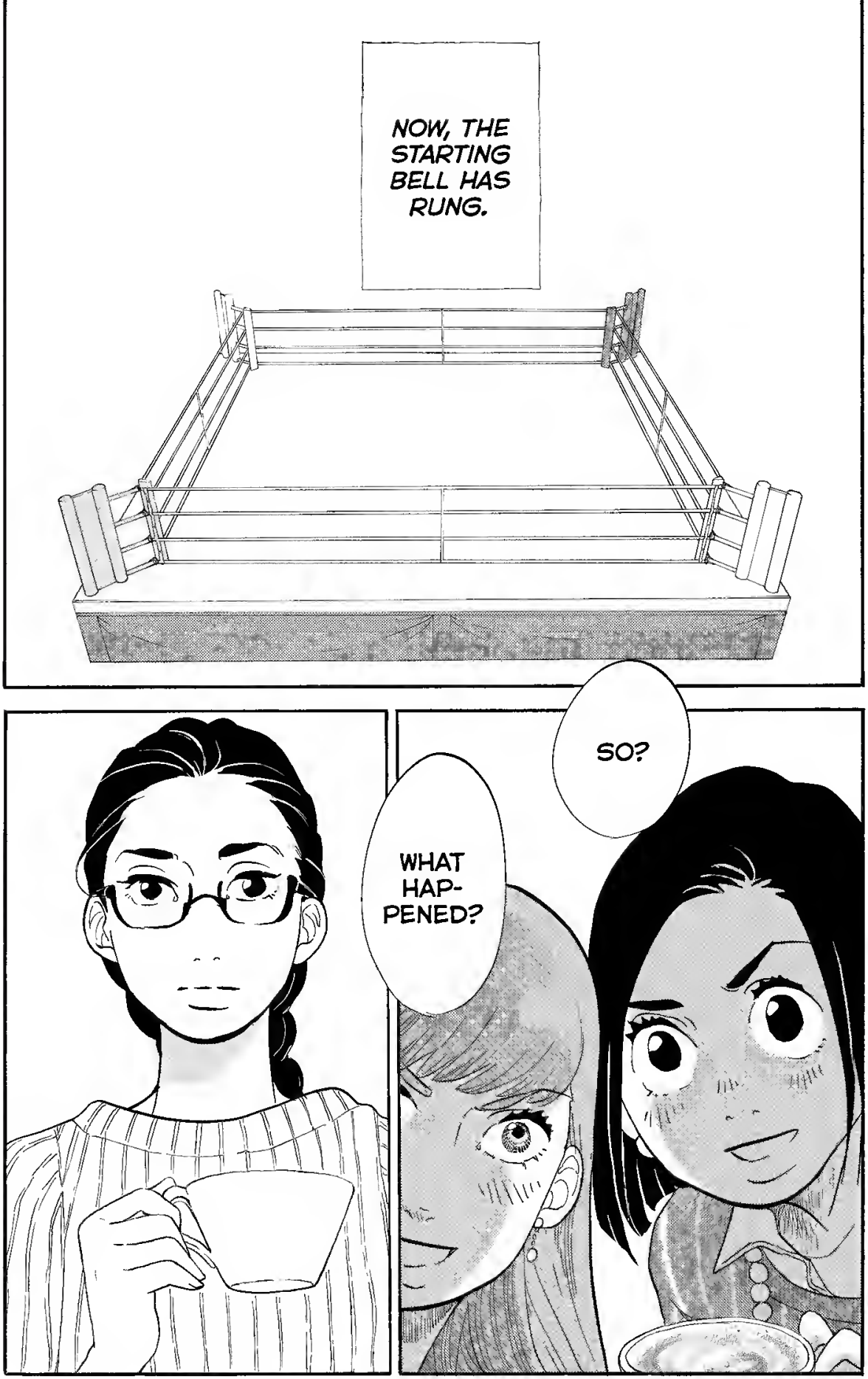
OH, IS THAT WHAT THIS IS?
BUT I'LL GIVE UP ON IT IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT.
BUT MY WIFE AND I LIVE SEPA-RATELY.
I DON'T PLAN TO LIE TO HER OR HIDE IT.

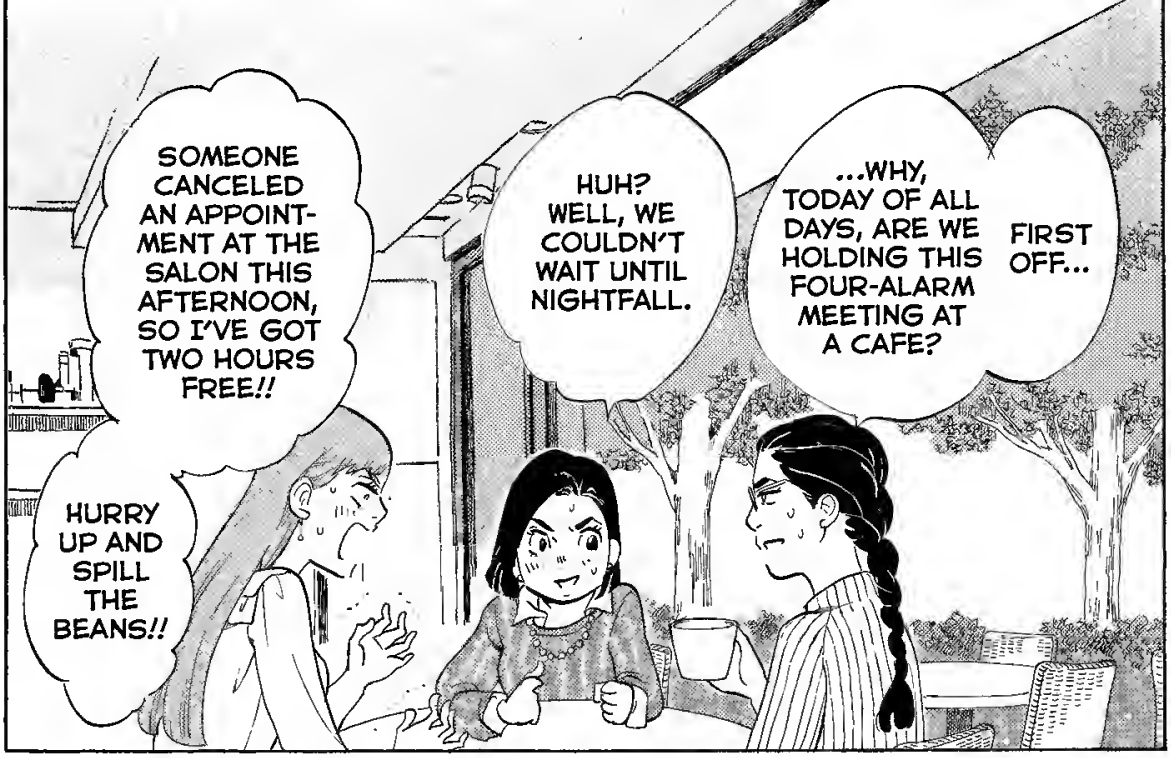
AM I DRUNK?
HMM?
HE'S A KIND MAN WHO PUT THE CHOICE IN MY HANDS BY TELLING ME THE TRUTH.
BUT HE WAS UPFRONT ABOUT IT. HE'S HONEST.
I SEE STRANGE THINGS FLOATING ABOVE ME.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WOMEN LIKE YOU ARE THE MOST DANGER-OUS KIND.
THAT'S RIGHT. WOMEN WHO THINK THEY'RE GROWNUPS WITH THEIR LIVES ON TRACK. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

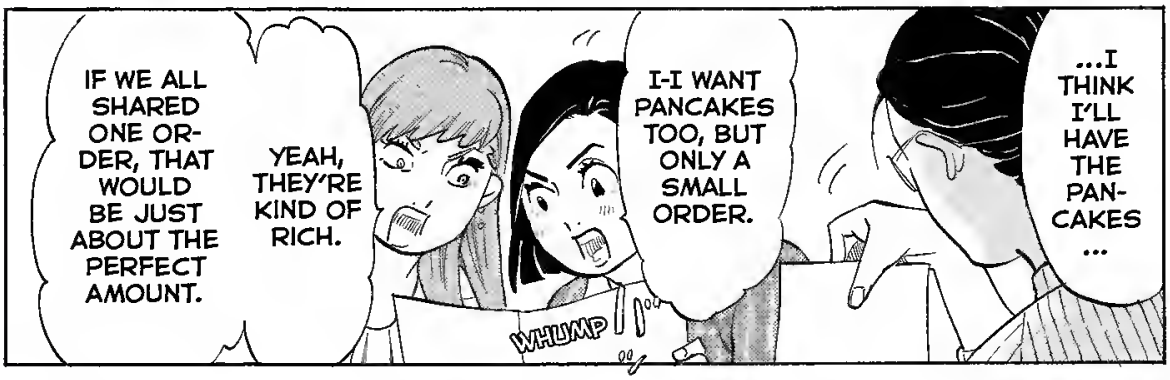
GUFFAW GUFFAW
HOTEL
AHAHA-HA! I KNEW IT!
SEE? YOU WALKED RIGHT IN.
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THEY CALL WOMEN LIKE YOU?
OH YES. THAT'S A GOOD ONE.
SOMEONE GIVE 'EM A CUSHION.
FWIP
YOU PRETEND TO BE ABOVE IT ALL, BUT YOU'RE JUST AS FISHY AS EVERYONE ELSE...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WE CALL YOU A SOUSED MACKEREL WOMAN!
GUFFAW
GUFFAW
GUFFAW

ACT 8 PUNCH-DRUNK WOMEN




NOW, THE STARTING BELL HAS RUNG.
SO?
WHAT HAP-PENED?


SOMEONE CANCELED AN APPOINT-MENT AT THE SALON THIS AFTERNOON, SO I'VE GOT TWO HOURS FREE!!
HURRY UP AND SPILL THE BEANS!!
HUH? WELL, WE COULDN'T WAIT UNTIL NIGHTFALL.
...WHY, TODAY OF ALL DAYS, ARE WE HOLDING THIS FOUR-ALARM MEETING AT A CAFE?
FIRST OFF...


IF WE ALL SHARED ONE OR-DER, THAT WOULD BE JUST ABOUT THE PERFECT AMOUNT.
YEAH, THEY'RE KIND OF RICH.
I-I WANT PANCAKES TOO, BUT ONLY A SMALL ORDER.
WHUMP
...I THINK I'LL HAVE THE PAN-CAKES ...

SO SO SO SO SO SO SO SO SO SO SO?!
SO?! SO?!
I'LL HAVE ANOTHER CAPPUCCINO AND THE MIXED FRUIT PANCAKES WITH RICOTTA ON TOP.
HUFF HUFF
NOW WILL YOU PLEASE TELL US WHAT HAP-PENED LAST NIGHT ?!

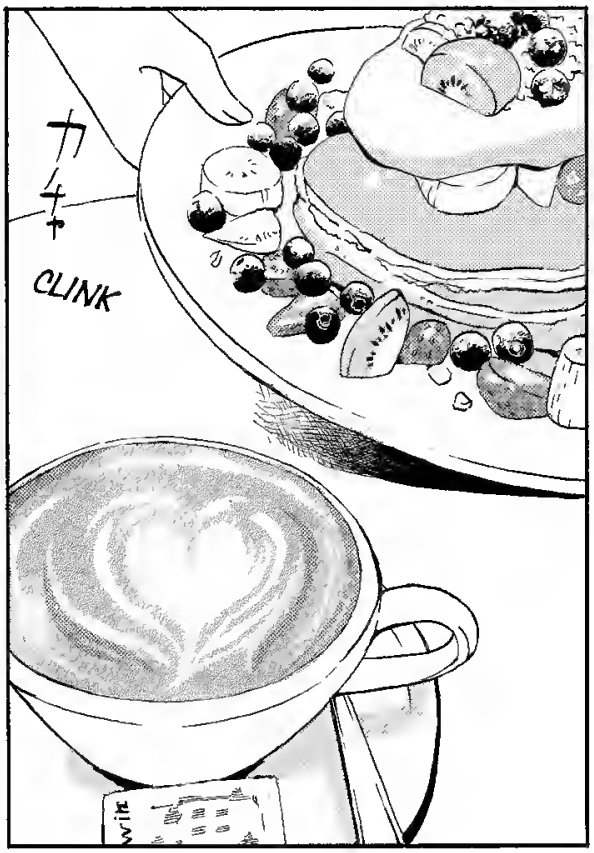
WE'VE BEEN EATING NOTHING BUT MILT AND LIVER AT NONBEE FOR SO LONG, I THOUGHT THEY'D REVOKE OUR GIRL CARDS!
WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME WE TALKED ABOUT LOVE OVER PAN-CAKES AT A FANCY CAFE ON AOYAMA STREET?
AHHH! THIS IS SO NICE!
WAIT-RESS!
HEHE-HEH
TEE HEE

...
SIP ズ...
WELL ...
I SUP-POSE ...
...WE DID DECIDE TO GO OUT...
...I GUESS.
OHHHHH!
ALL ROOOIII-IIIGHT!!
THAT'S SO GREAT !!
GLOMP ひしっ
OH, BUT...
...HE'S MARRIED.

HERE YOU ARE.
...

ONE CAPPUCCINO AND ONE ORDER OF MIXED FRUIT PANCAKES WITH RICOTTA.

CLINK カチャ…


カチャ
CLINK

CLINK
SHUNK
CLINK
SHUNK
...!
WELL.
IT'S AN AFFAIR.
HUH ?!
YOU DIDN'T ?!
ACTUALLY, THAT NIGHT RYO GOT SO DRUNK, I ALSO...KIND OF...
HA!
YOU'RE KID-DING ...
KAO-RI...
KOYUKI.
YOU MUST THINK I'M SCUM.

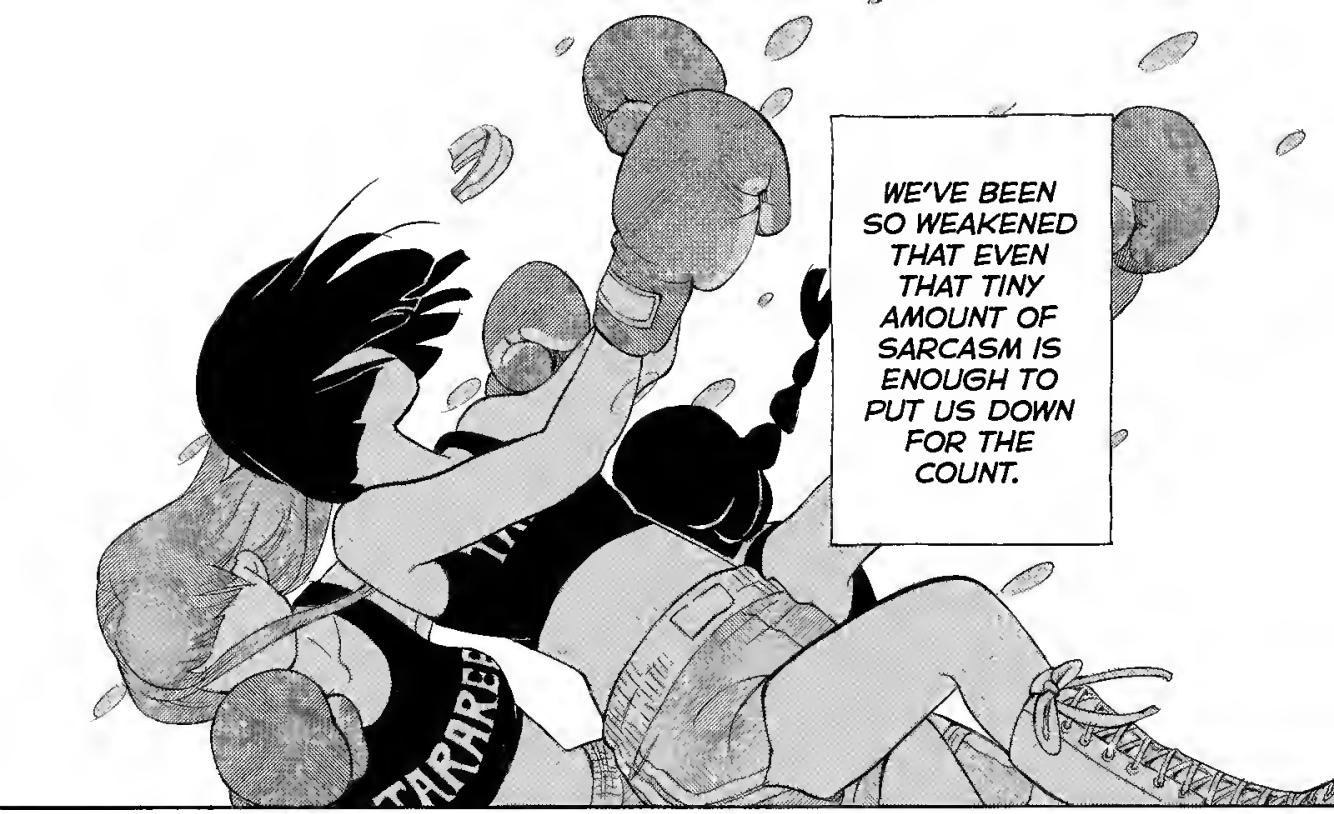
...
NOT REALLY.
EVERY-ONE DOES IT.
WELL, THIS IS MY FIRST TIME.
THE FIRST TIME I'VE DONE ANYTHING THIS BAD, I MEAN.
WHUMP
...
WHAT?
I LOVE YOU, KOYUKI.
WHAM
CLATTER
CRASH
JEEZ!

AHHH!
THIS SMELL TAKES ME BACK...
HEY! CUT IT OUT!
YARGH!
KAORI!
UGH!
GRAB
YOU'VE GOTTA WALK RIGHT!
COME ON, RYO!
THIS IS YOUR SMELL...
HEY!
COME UP FOR A WHILE, KAORI!
WHA?!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?! WHAT IF YOUR GIRL-FRIEND SHOWS UP?!
OH, DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER.
SHE'S IN NEW YORK RIGHT NOW.
ウィー!
WHRRRRR
NO ONE'S COMING! I'M SO LONELY!
HUH?!
HERE?!

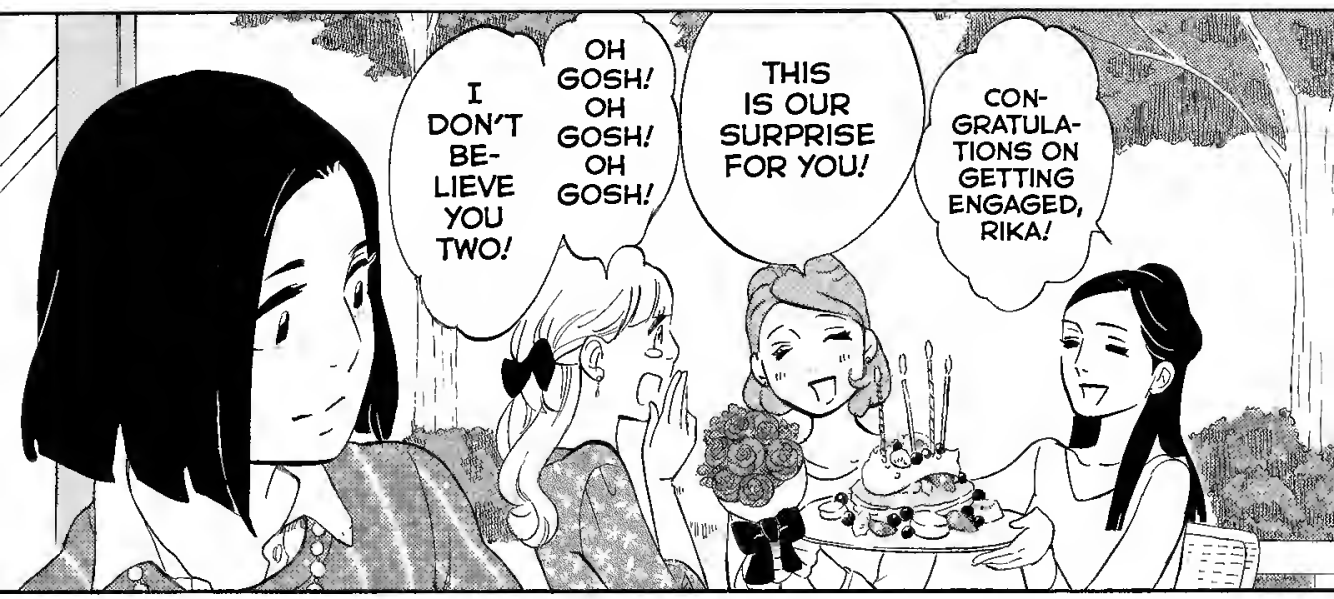
YOU KNOW, YOU COULD SEE IT FROM THAT APARTMENT WE USED TO LIVE IN TOGETHER BACK IN KAMATA TOO.
...
EVEN THOUGH IT WAS REALLY TINY...
BEEP
YOU CAN SEE TOKYO TOWER RIGHT FROM THE WINDOW!
YEAH!
WAIT, RYO?! YOU LIVE IN THIS FANCY PLACE?!
BEEP
BEEP
I WANT YOU TO SEE IT.
IT'S REALLY PRETTY.
IT'S A LOT BIGGER THAN IT WAS BACK THEN!
KER-CHUNK
GRAB

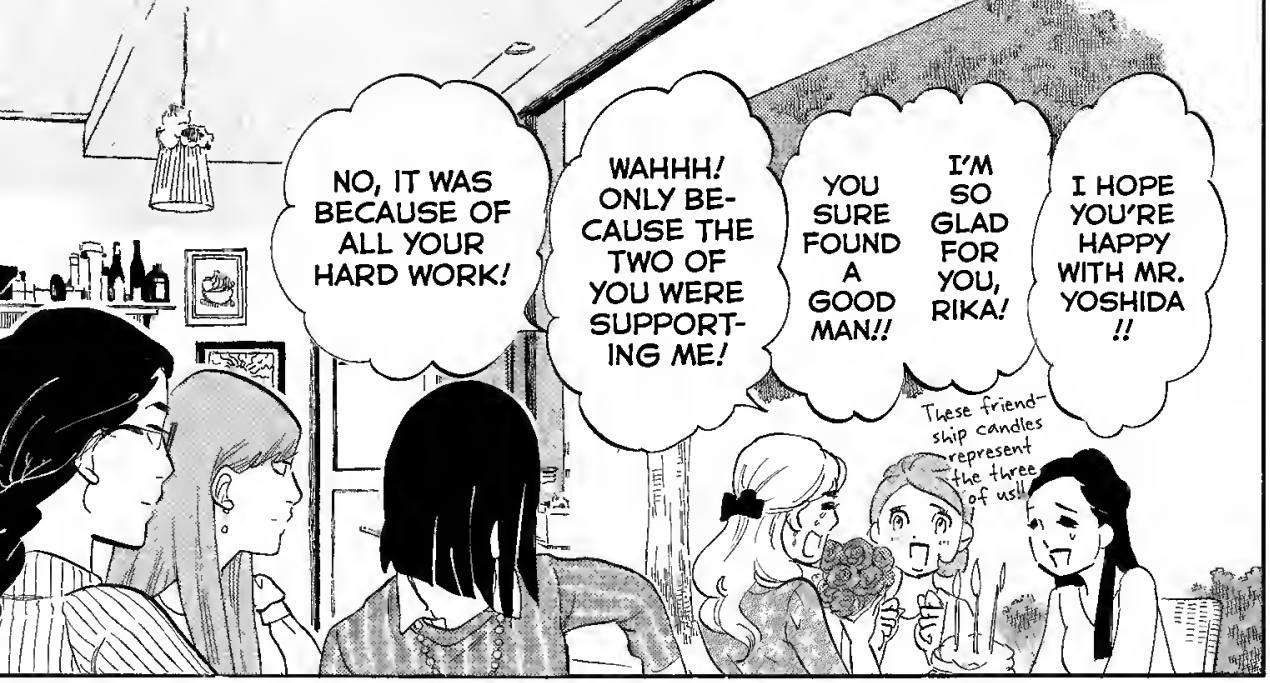
IN THIS CITY CALLED TOKYO...
SWEET DREAMS.
HAPPY DREAMS.
...WE ARE ALWAYS DREAM-ING.
MOMEN-TARY...

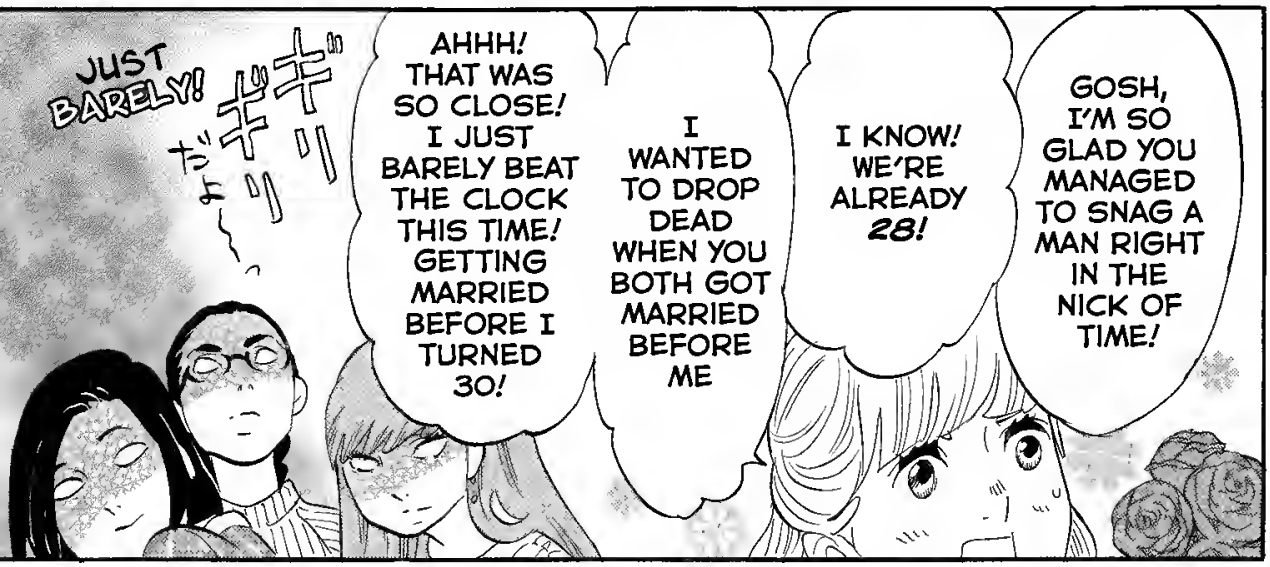
...FLEETING DREAMS.
IF IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SARCASM, I WISH THEY'D CUT IT OUT.
WHY DID OUR ANCESTORS GIVE IT THAT SYMBOL?
IN JAPANESE, THE SYMBOL FOR "FLEETING" IS WRITTEN AS "A PERSON'S DREAM."


WE'VE BEEN SO WEAKENED THAT EVEN THAT TINY AMOUNT OF SARCASM IS ENOUGH TO PUT US DOWN FOR THE COUNT.

GASP
NO WAY?! WHAT THE HECK?!
WHAT ?!

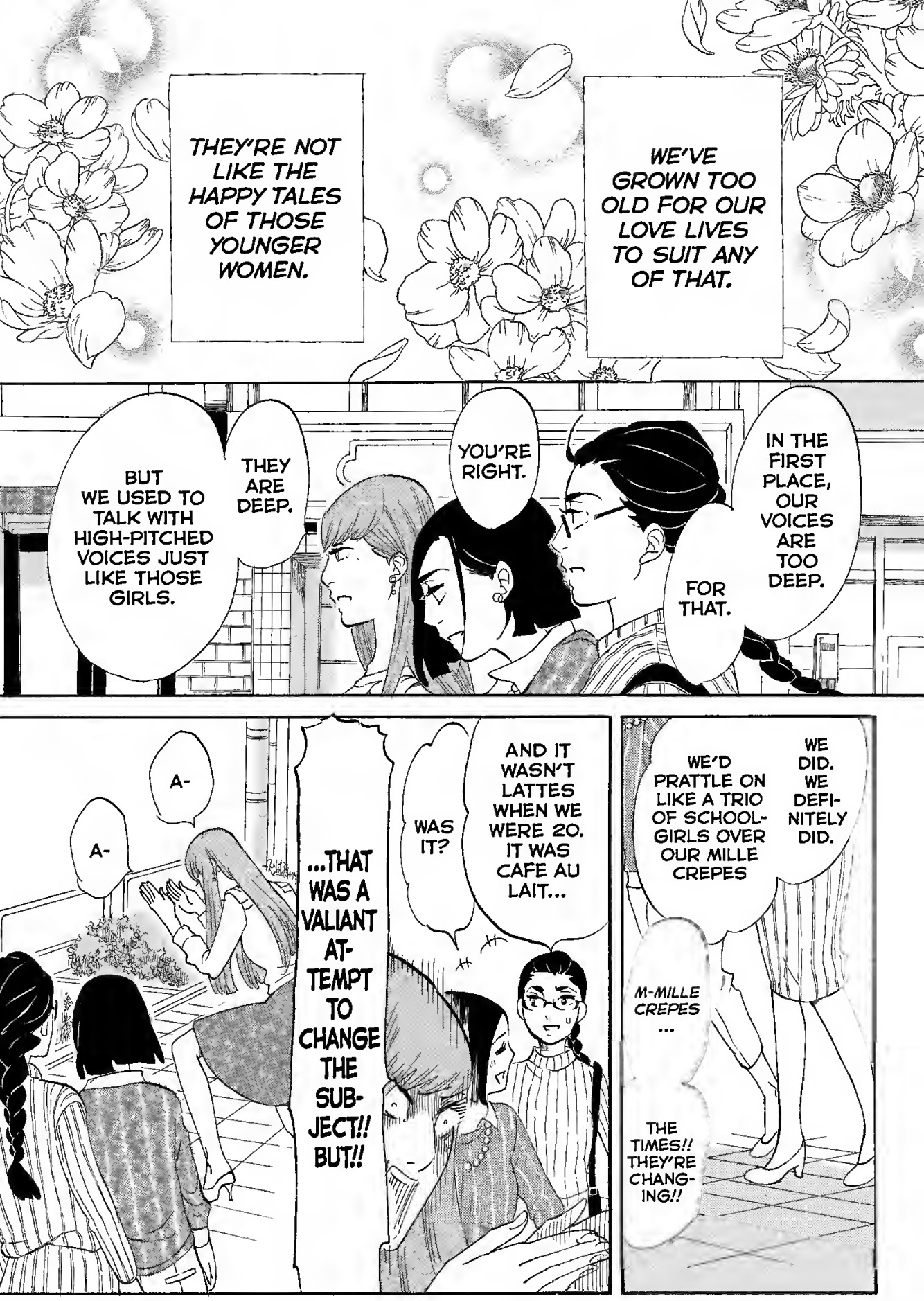

I DON'T BE-LIEVE YOU TWO!
OH GOSH! OH GOSH! OH GOSH!
THIS IS OUR SURPRISE FOR YOU!
CON-GRATULA-TIONS ON GETTING ENGAGED, RIKA!


I HOPE YOU'RE HAPPY WITH MR. YOSHIDA !!
I'M SO GLAD FOR YOU, RIKA!
YOU SURE FOUND A GOOD MAN!!
These friendship candles represent the three of us!!
WAHHH! ONLY BECAUSE THE TWO OF YOU WERE SUPPORTING ME!
NO, IT WAS BECAUSE OF ALL YOUR HARD WORK!

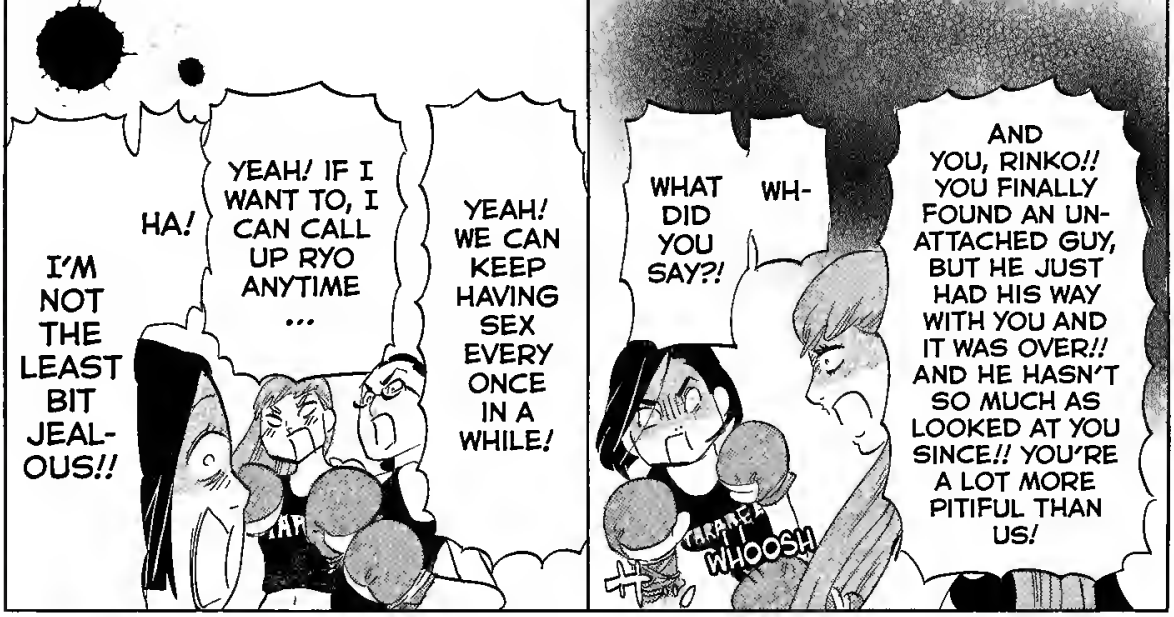

GOSH, I'M SO GLAD YOU MANAGED TO SNAG A MAN RIGHT IN THE NICK OF TIME!
I KNOW! WE'RE ALREADY 28!
I WANTED TO DROP DEAD WHEN YOU BOTH GOT MARRIED BEFORE ME
AHHH! THAT WAS SO CLOSE! I JUST BARELY BEAT THE CLOCK THIS TIME! GETTING MARRIED BEFORE I TURNED 30!
JUST BARELY!
ギリギリ
だよ〜ん

THE WEDDING'S GONNA BE IN HAWAII?! WE CAN COME TOO, RIGHT?!
OF COURSE! YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY BRIDESMAIDS!!
HOORAY!! THEN WE'LL ALL BE ABLE TO EAT AUTHENTIC PANCAKES!
SHUNK
SHUNK
SHUNK
SHUNK
...WANNA GET OUT OF HERE?

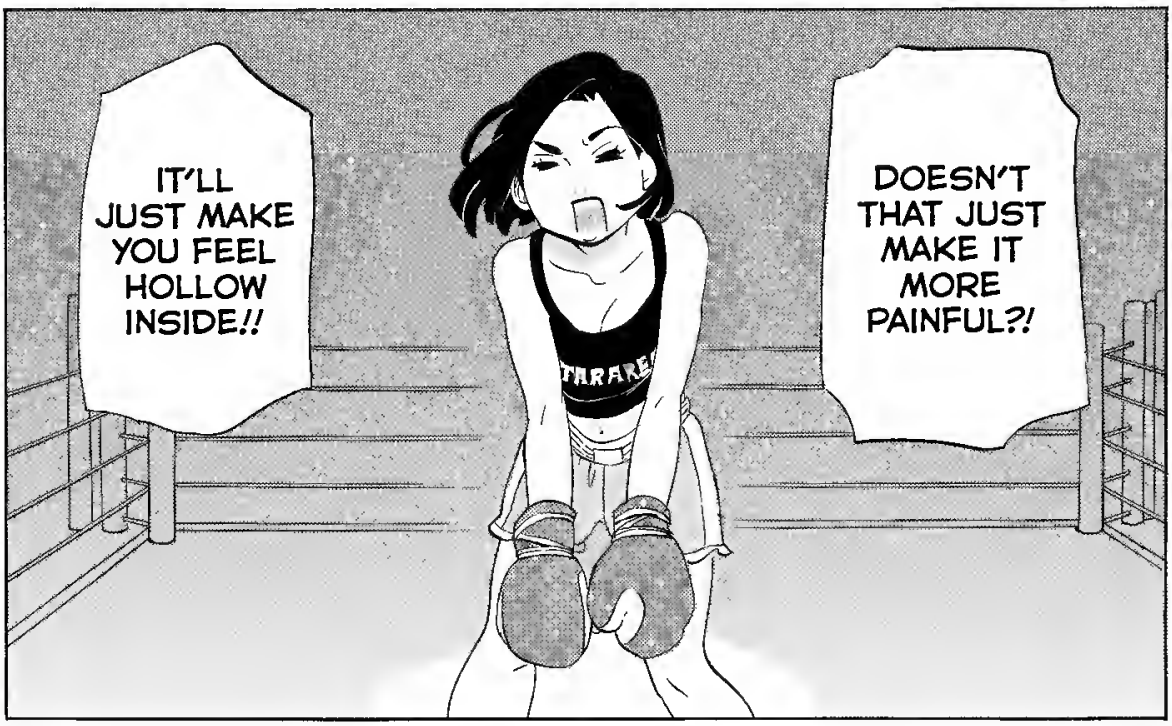
KA-BOOOOOM
LET'S ALL HAVE OUR KIDS AT THE SAME TIME SO THEY CAN BE CLASS-MATES!!
YAY!!
WHAT-IF ARMY!! FULL RE-TREAT !!
YAAA-AARGH !!
OUR LOVE LIVES AREN'T THE KIND OF THING YOU DISCUSS AT A CAFE,
SITTING UNDER THE BRIGHT SUNLIGHT STREAMING THROUGH THE TREES...
...EATING CUTE PANCAKES COVERED WITH FRUIT...
...WHILE GAZING AT THE HEARTS DRAWN IN OUR CAP-PUCCINO FOAM...


WE'VE GROWN TOO OLD FOR OUR LOVE LIVES TO SUIT ANY OF THAT.
THEY'RE NOT LIKE THE HAPPY TALES OF THOSE YOUNGER WOMEN.
IN THE FIRST PLACE, OUR VOICES ARE TOO DEEP.
YOU'RE RIGHT.
FOR THAT.
THEY ARE DEEP.
BUT WE USED TO TALK WITH HIGH-PITCHED VOICES JUST LIKE THOSE GIRLS.
WE DID. WE DEFINITELY DID.
WE'D PRATTLE ON LIKE A TRIO OF SCHOOLGIRLS OVER OUR MILLE CREPES
M-MILLE CREPES ...
THE TIMES!! THEY'RE CHANGING!!
AND IT WASN'T LATTES WHEN WE WERE 20. IT WAS CAFE AU LAIT...
WAS IT?
...THAT WAS A VALIANT ATTEMPT TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT!! BUT!!
A-
A-

SNAP
WHAT?!
WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY, FOUR-EYES?!
GASP
IT'S BETTER THAN BONING YOUR EX WHEN HE'S GOT A NEW GIRL-FRIEND.
AFFAIRS ARE BAD!!
BAD!
AFFAIRS!
ARE!
STAGGER
BMPH!!
THOK
YOUR LITTLE MUSICIAN'S GOT A REAL GIRLFRIEND, SO ARE YOU ANY BETTER?!
WHOK
BANGING YOUR EX IS A HUNDRED TIMES BETTER THAN HAVING AN AFFAIR WITH A MARRIED MAN!!
CAUGHT IN THE CROSS-FIRE!!
BMPH!!
POW
DON'T TAKE ALL THE GOOD LINES!!
IT'S NOT! FOR ME, IT WAS AN ACT OF LOVE, AFTER WE BOTH KNEW HOW WE FELT! IT'S NOT LIKE HAVING A MUSICIAN TREAT YOU LIKE A DISPOSABLE CONTACT LENS, LIKE MS. ACUVUE HERE!!
OH, COME ON! IT'S PRETTY MUCH THE SAME THING EITHER WAY, YOU TWO! DON'T FIGHT!
TARAR

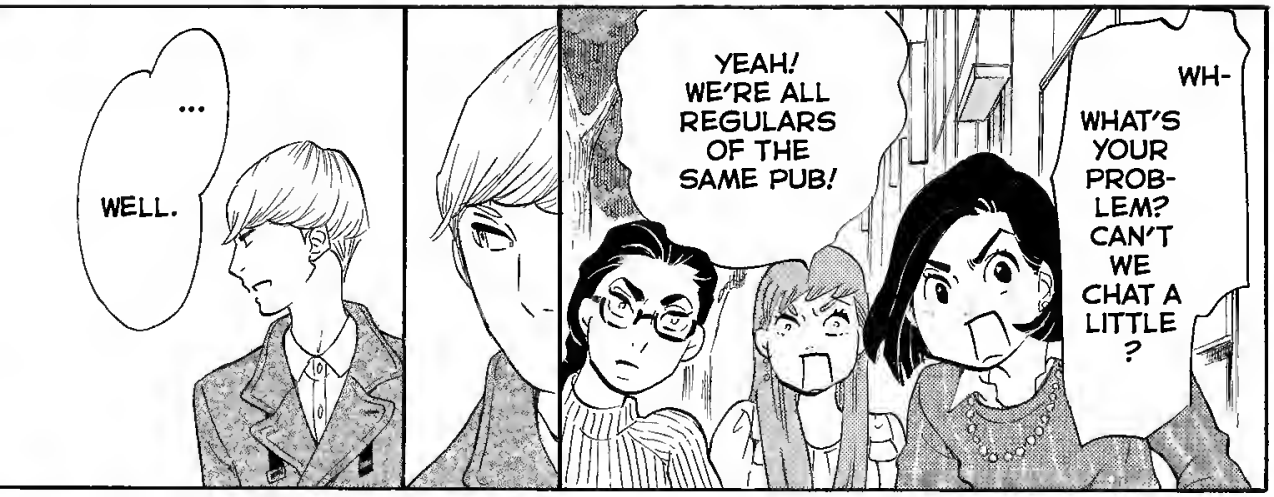

I'M NOT THE LEAST BIT JEAL-OUS!!
HA!
YEAH! IF I WANT TO, I CAN CALL UP RYO ANYTIME ...
YEAH! WE CAN KEEP HAVING SEX EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE!
WHAT DID YOU SAY?!
WH-
AND YOU, RINKO!! YOU FINALLY FOUND AN UN-ATTACHED GUY, BUT HE JUST HAD HIS WAY WITH YOU AND IT WAS OVER!! AND HE HASN'T SO MUCH AS LOOKED AT YOU SINCE!! YOU'RE A LOT MORE PITIFUL THAN US!
WHOOSH

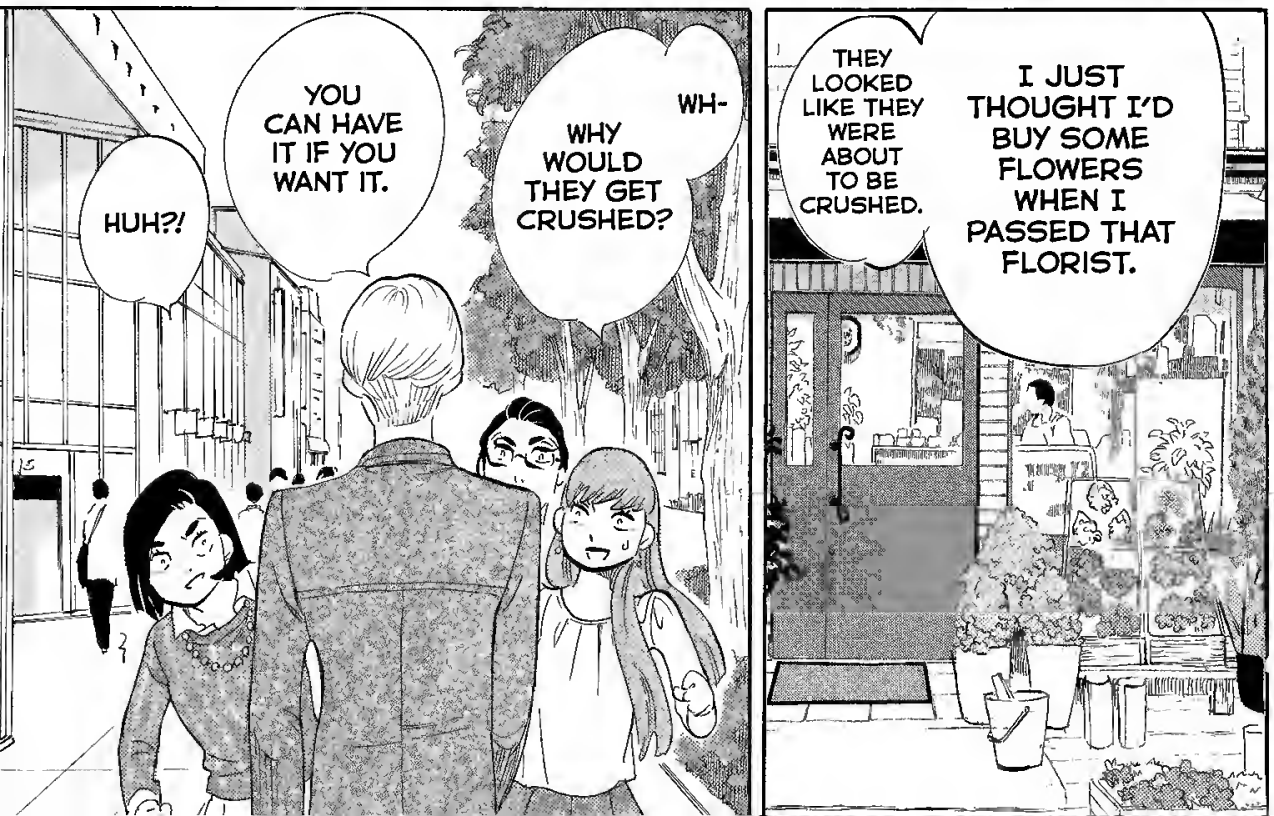
IT DOESN'T MEAN ANY-THING!!
THERE'S NOTHING IN IT TO TIE THEM DOWN!!
NO MATTER HOW MUCH SEX YOU HAVE!!


IT'LL JUST MAKE YOU FEEL HOLLOW INSIDE!!
DOESN'T THAT JUST MAKE IT MORE PAINFUL?!

STOP THAT. YOU'RE MAKING A SCENE.
HONK
HONK
HUFF
HUFF
EVERY-ONE'S WATCH-ING.
THEY ALL THINK YOU'RE A BUNCH OF CRAZY WOMEN YELLING "SEX! SEX!" ON AOYAMA STREET IN BROAD DAY-LIGHT.
HE'S HERE AGAIN ...
WHAT IS IT THIS TIME? BUY-ING MORE FLOWERS TO TAKE TO THE CEMETERY ?

...
TURN
AH! HE DID IT AGAIN!
IS IT PUBERTY?!
YOU BRAT!
The same thing!
HEY! NOT SO FAST!


WH- WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM? CAN'T WE CHAT A LITTLE?
YEAH! WE'RE ALL REGULARS OF THE SAME PUB!
...
WELL.

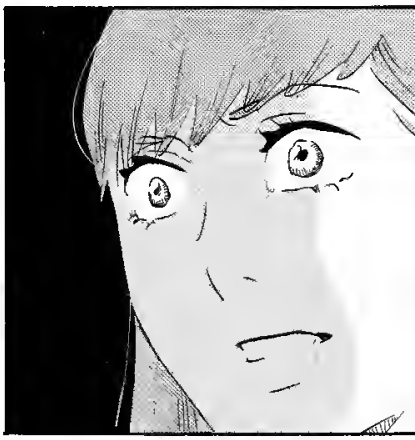

I JUST THOUGHT I'D BUY SOME FLOWERS WHEN I PASSED THAT FLORIST.
THEY LOOKED LIKE THEY WERE ABOUT TO BE CRUSHED.
WH- WHY WOULD THEY GET CRUSHED?
YOU CAN HAVE IT IF YOU WANT IT.
HUH?!

HERE.
WHOA!
GOOD FOR YOU, RINKO!
TAKE IT! TAKE IT!
NOW THAT'S CREEPY ...
WHA ?!
WHO'RE YOU CALLIN' CREEPY ?!
SEE YA.
TURN
STEP STEP

TMP
TMP
TMP
YEESH...
I DON'T GET HIM. WHY DOES HE HIDE IT? HE'S GOTTA BE GOING TO THE CEMETERY ANYWAY, RIGHT?
DEFINITELY. IT'S JUST A STONE'S THROW FROM HERE.
KAORI, WHY DON'T YOU ASK YOUR EX?
MR. MODEL'S DEFINITELY HIDING SOMETHING.
HUH?
YOU'RE REALLY ASKING ABOUT THAT?
OH! THEN YOU DO KNOW!
WHAT'S THAT ALL ABOUT?
WELL, I'D SAY IT'S PROBABLY...
...AN OLD FLAME.
HUH?!
AN OLD FLAME?

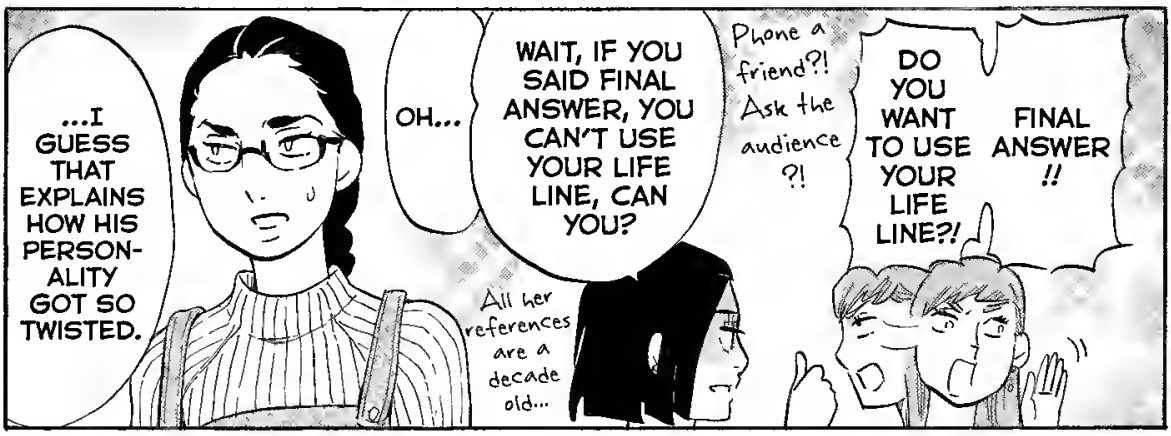
SHE DIED. APPARENTLY.
GO ON...
AND ALSO ACCORDING TO THE RUMORS ...
ACCORDING TO RUMORS, HE DATED A WAAAY OLDER WOMAN, A WHILE BACK.

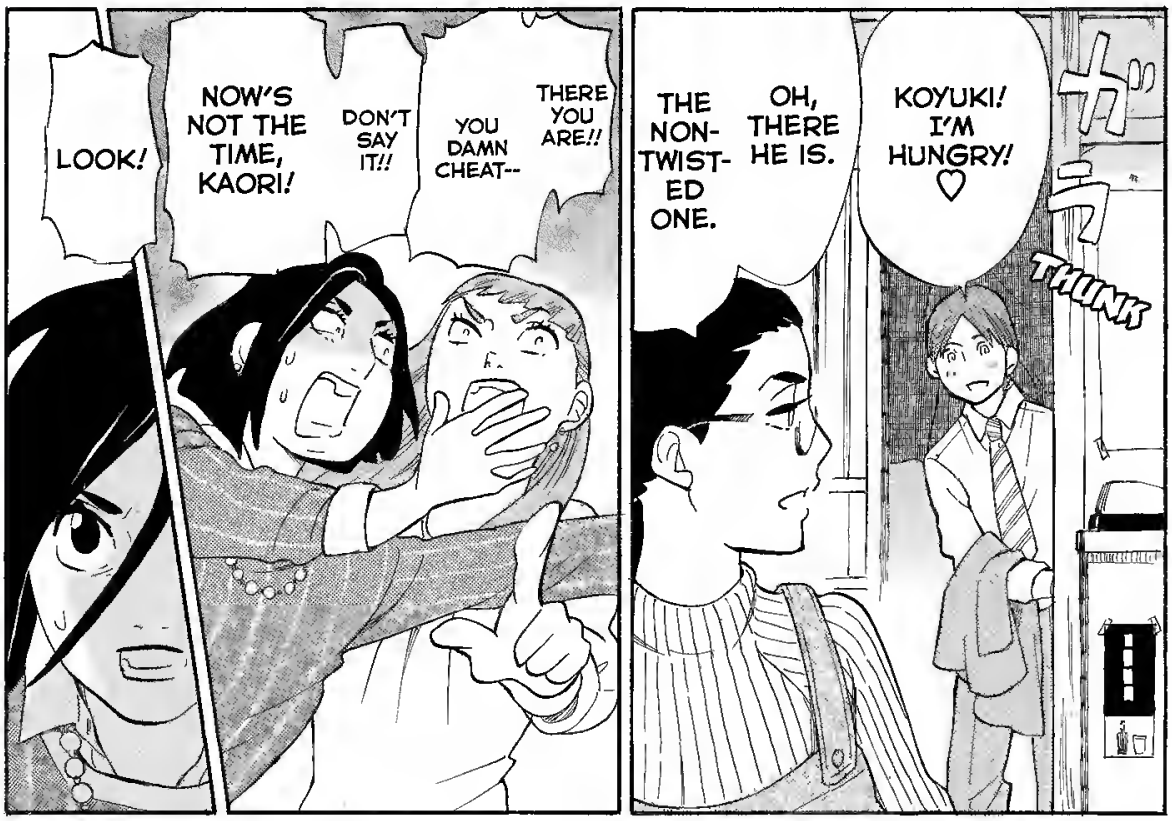
NOW THAT'S AN OLD EXAMPLE ...
...THE TRA-BRYU SONG?
YOU MEAN LIKE ...



THAT BRING YOU HAPPINESS ...
I THINK IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS ...
ドーン
BOOM
ドーン
BOOM
酒処
PUB

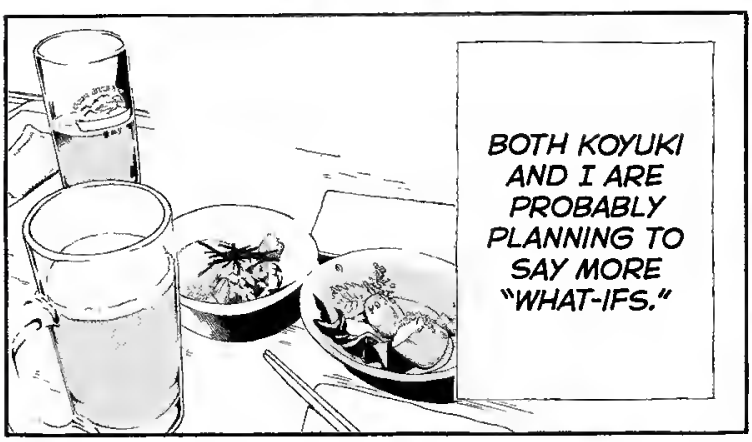
THAT MEANS HIS OLD GIRLFRIEND DIED, AND HE VISITS HER GRAVE ON THE REGULAR? IS THAT YOUR FINAL ANSWER?
YOU ONLY HALF-REMEMBER THOSE LYRICS, HUH?
IT HAPPENED A YEAR AGO... I REMEMBER IT WHEN I TAKE THIS ROAD...
THAT NIGHT-MARE PHONE CALL...


...I GUESS THAT EXPLAINS HOW HIS PERSON-ALITY GOT SO TWISTED.
OH...
WAIT, IF YOU SAID FINAL ANSWER, YOU CAN'T USE YOUR LIFE LINE, CAN YOU?
All her references are a decade old...
Phone a friend?! Ask the audience ?!
DO YOU WANT TO USE YOUR LIFE LINE?!
FINAL ANSWER !!

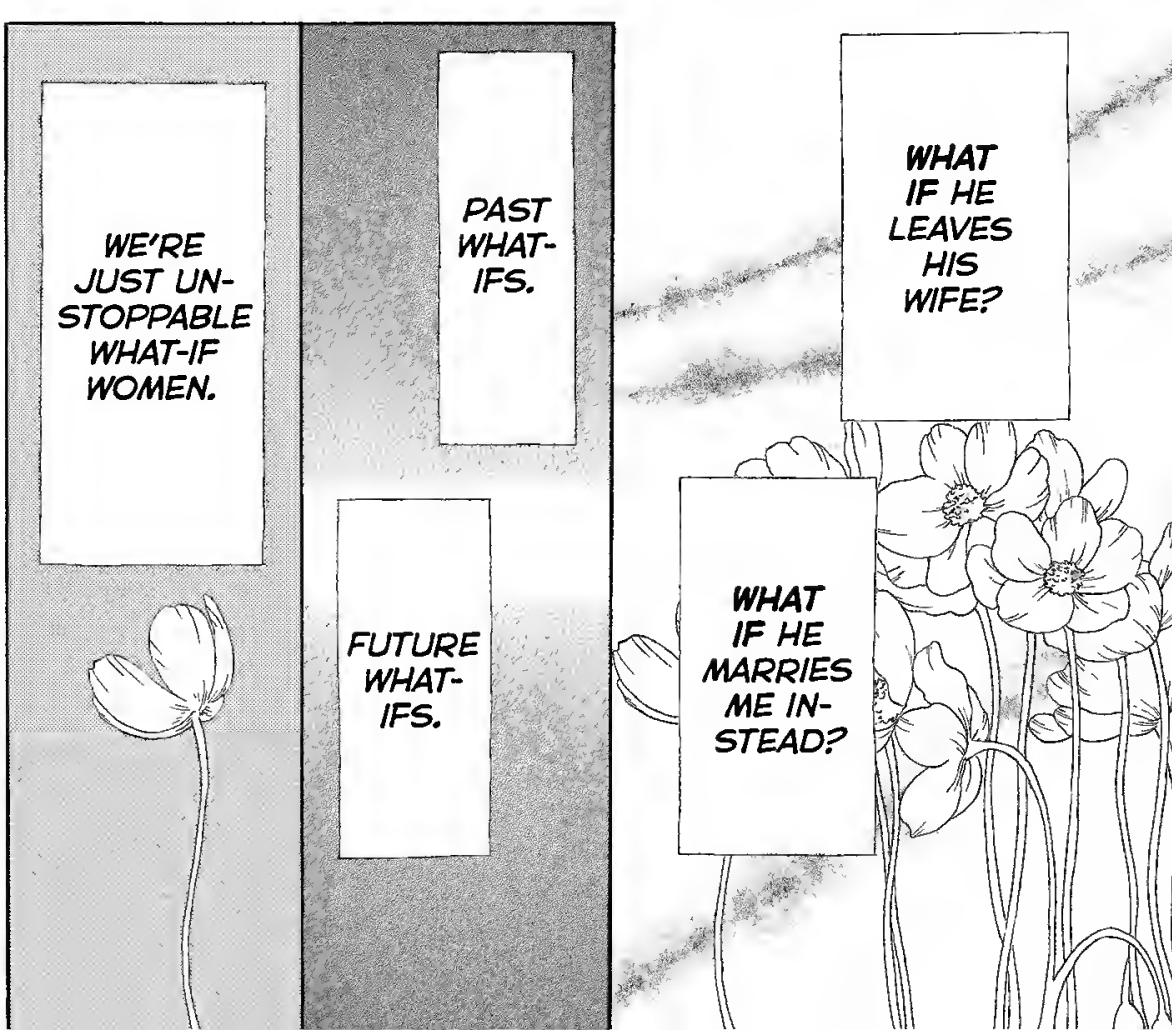

LOOK!
NOW'S NOT THE TIME, KAORI!
DON'T SAY IT!!
YOU DAMN CHEAT--
THERE YOU ARE!!
THE NON-TWIST-ED ONE.
OH, THERE HE IS.
KOYUKI! I'M HUNGRY! ♡
THUNK

SMILE
YEAH!
I'M THIRSTY!
UGH! LOOK AT THAT ENORMOUS GRIN!
Don't you go "I'm thirsty!", you idiot!
DO YOU WANT A BEER?
HOW DO YOU LOOK HAPPY WITHOUT LETTING IT SHOW?
KOYUKI LOOKS SO HAPPY, BUT SHE DOESN'T LET IT SHOW!
Here. Drink up.
Thanks.
UGH...
...I'M NOT JEALOUS, BUT I KIND OF AM...
THIS MAY BE AN AFFAIR, BUT THERE'S STILL LOVE THERE...
Here, we have sauteed veggies today.
Hurray!

...QUIETLY WATCHING MY BEST FRIEND START A RELATIONSHIP THAT CAN ONLY END IN TEARS.
I'M JUST A LOSER ...


BOTH KOYUKI AND I ARE PROBABLY PLANNING TO SAY MORE "WHAT-IFS."

...I GUESS THAT'S NOT RIGHT.
NO...


WE'RE JUST UNSTOPPABLE WHAT-IF WOMEN.
PAST WHAT-IFS.
FUTURE WHAT-IFS.
WHAT IF HE LEAVES HIS WIFE?
WHAT IF HE MARRIES ME INSTEAD?

WE CAN'T QUIT DRINKING AND COMPLAINING.
WE CAN'T QUIT DREAMING.
WE KNOW THAT, BUT WE JUST CAN'T QUIT.

WE CAN'T QUIT BEING WOMEN.
...WE JUST CAN'T.
EVEN IF WE WANTED TO...

I WONDER HOW THAT GIRL DIED?
SHE WAS SO YOUNG.
I GUESS HE'S BEEN THROUGH A LOT TOO.
OH.
BUT IT'S STRANGE.
AHHH ...
EITHER WAY, THAT'S SO SAD.
ILLNESS? AN ACCI-DENT?
...YOU KNOW...
WE'VE DONE THAT...
...WE GOT NAKED AND DID THAT...

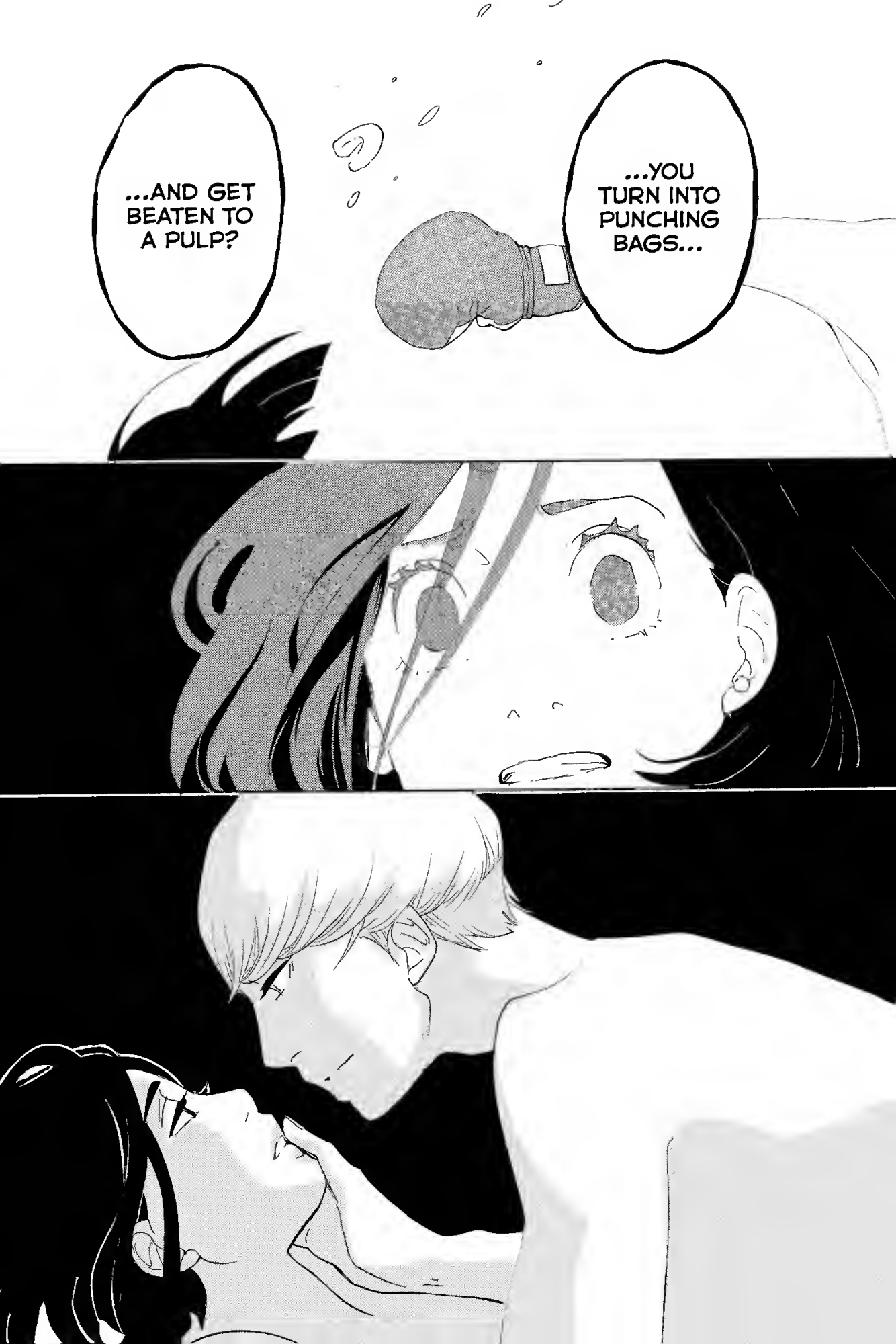
...BUT I DON'T KNOW A THING ABOUT HIM.
AND HE DOESN'T KNOW A THING ABOUT ME.
THEN, WHAT IS SEX, ANYWAY?
I DON'T KNOW ANY-MORE.
EVEN IF IT WAS JUST A MOMENTARY LAPSE IN JUDGMENT OR ONLY GIVING IN TO TEMPTA-TION...
...WE'VE DONE IT ONCE...
...SO DOESN'T HE HAVE THE SLIGHTEST INTEREST IN LEARN-ING MORE ABOUT THE WOMAN HE DID IT WITH?
RISE
RISE
むく
むく
カキフライ
いわし天ぷら
フライ
ま揚
けそ唐揚
銀杏
あさりバター
ハンペンバター
えのきバター
片口いわし唐揚

GASP
...BUT CONGRATS ON WASTING SO MUCH TIME PONDERING! WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
YOU NEVER DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT...
I'LL NEVER ...
...FIND AN ANSWER?
RINKO!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'LL NEVER FIND AN ANSWER, NO MATTER HOW LONG YOU THINK ABOUT IT? SO, CONGRATS!
SPRING
RISE
FWAP
W-WELL...
BECAUSE YOU'RE OLD?
...WHY DON'T THE THREE OF YOU EVER APPROACH MEN YOURSELVES?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WE ASKED YOU THIS...
BUT IT'S... ALREADY IN THE PAST...
DO ANYTHING?
...BAD MANNERS?
WELL... BECAUSE... YOU KNOW... ISN'T DIGGING INTO SOMEONE'S PAST LIKE THAT...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU JUST ASKED HIM YOURSELF?
RINKO.
HAVE YOU GOTTEN TO THE AGE WHERE YOU DON'T WANT TO EXPERIENCE THE SHAME AND HUMILIATION OF REJECTION? WHAT IF! WHAT IF!
EVEN THOUGH YOU DID IT WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER, YOU THINK IT'S IMPOSSIBLE NOW THAT YOU'RE 33?
UGH!
GIGGLE
GIGGLE
S-STOP THAT ...
HEHE-HEH!

WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU THREE ARE ALWAYS LIKE THAT.
FLOAT
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU STOPPED ACTING LIKE YOU'RE IN THE RING USING A NO-GUARD STRATEGY?
SNAP
PINK
N-
NO GUARD STRATEGY?
WHAT'S THAT?
IF YOU'RE FIGHTING NO-GUARD STYLE WHEN YOU'RE 33, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU'RE 40? ROLL AROUND ON THE MAT?
I WON'T BE IN THE RING AT 40!
EVEN I WILL HAVE RETIRED BY THEN!
RINKO.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... WOMEN CAN'T RETIRE?
HUH?!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... A WOMAN HAS TO STAY IN THE RING AS LONG AS SHE'S UNMARRIED?
THAT'S RIGHT! WHEN A WOMAN GETS MARRIED, SHE BECOMES A CORNERMAN ...
...SUPPORTING AND CHEERING FOR HER HUSBAND AND KIDS. WHAT IF! WHAT IF!

...THAT'S JUST MISOGYNY!
BUT... BUT THAT'S ...
...ARE JUST CORNER-MEN FOR THEIR FAMILIES?
WHAT IF, WHAT IF...EVEN THE MARRIED WOMEN WHO ARE STILL IN THE RING WITH THEIR CAREERS...
TH-THAT'S RIDICULOUS! THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF WOMEN WORKING OUT THERE EVEN AFTER THEY GET MARRIED!
I'M NOT BEAT-UP!
SHUT UP!
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... IT'S EVEN HARDER TO STAY IN THE RING?
HOW COULD THAT BE ANYONE'S DREAM?!
THAT'S BORING!
I DON'T WANT TO BE SOME-ONE'S CORNER-MAN!
IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW UP AFTER YOU'VE SLEPT WITH A GUY, YOU'LL TURN INTO JUST ANOTHER BEAT-UP WOMAN...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU'LL LOSE THE MATCH IF YOU DON'T KEEP THROWING PUNCHES?
YEAH!
YEAH!
!

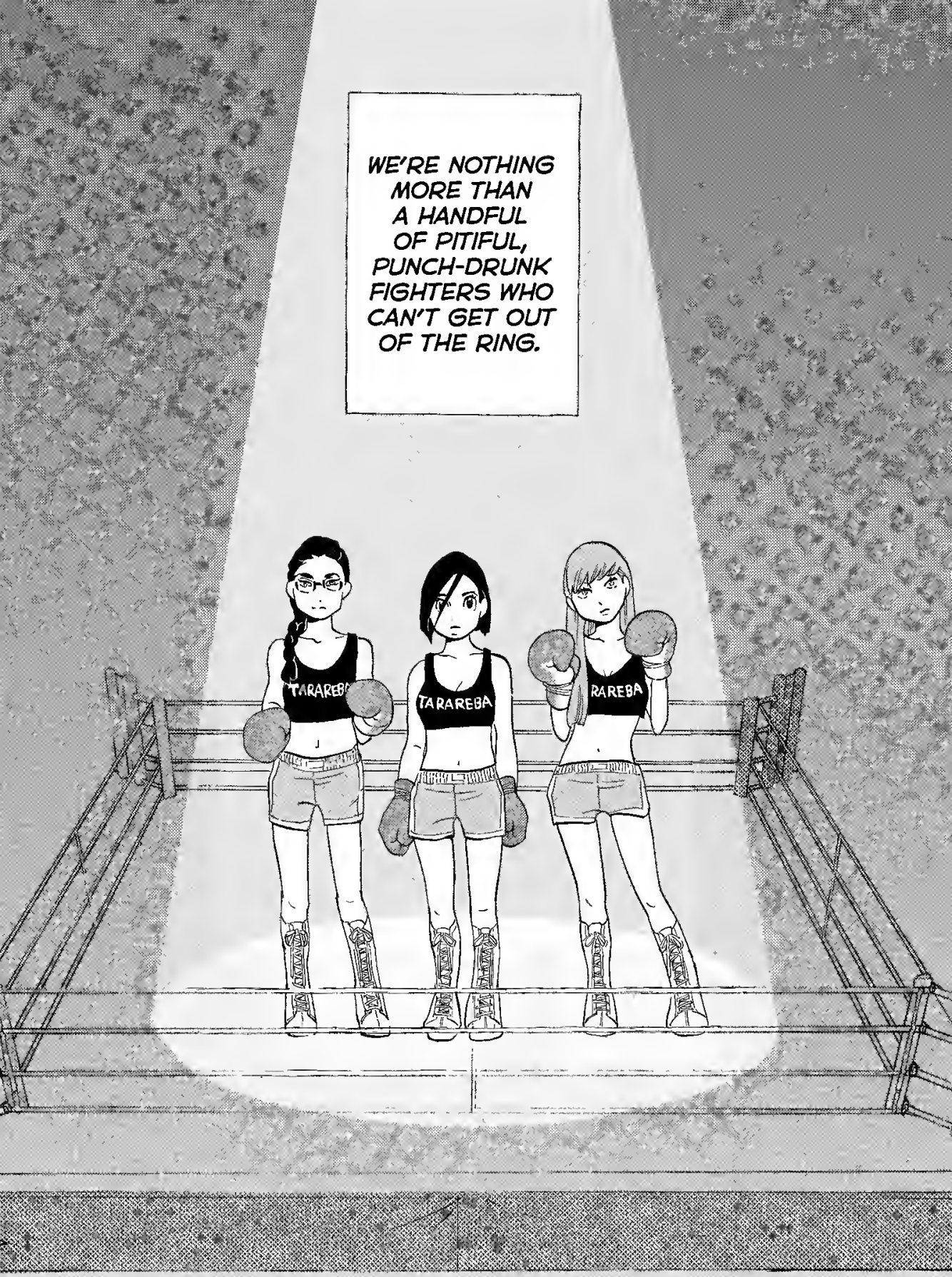
...IN THE MOMENT ...FOR THAT ONE MOMENT ...
I REALLY FELT LIKE I WAS LOVED!
EVEN IF WE DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT EACH OTHER...
OH?
HOW WERE YOU HAPPY?
IN THAT MOMENT, I WAS REALLY HAPPY!
HUH?!
YOU THREE AREN'T LOVED.
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... IT ISN'T?
ISN'T IT?!
ISN'T THAT WHAT SEX IS?!
...THEN, IN THE RING...
WHAT IF, WHAT IF... THE THREE OF YOU ALWAYS GET STRUNG ALONG BY THAT WORD, "LOVE"...
THAT WAS NOT AN ACT OF LOVE.

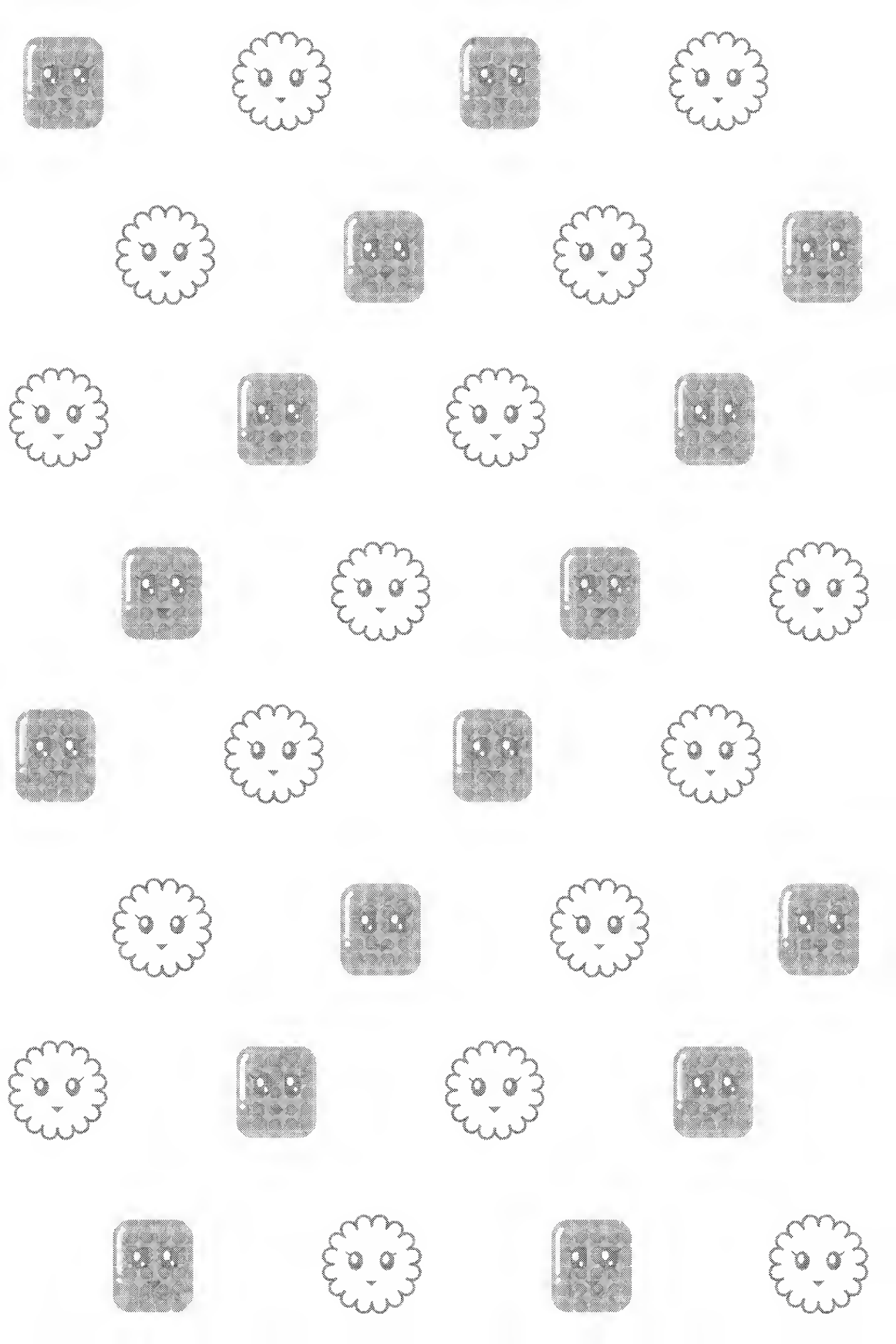

...AND GET BEATEN TO A PULP?
...YOU TURN INTO PUNCHING BAGS...

WHAT IF, WHAT IF... YOU OUGHT TO HAVE REALIZED THAT BY NOW? YOU'RE 33!

KOYU-KI...
STAY AWAY...
...FROM THAT GUY.
KAORI.
WAKE UP.
HE DOESN'T LOVE YOU ANYMORE.

AND I'M THE ONE WHO NEEDS A WAKE-UP CALL THE MOST.
I GOT A CAST-OFF BOUQUET HE BOUGHT FOR HIS DEAD GIRL-FRIEND...
THERE'S NO WAY A MAN A FULL DECADE MY JUNIOR WOULD LOVE ME.
YEP.
...BUT I'M SO STUPID THAT IT STILL MADE ME A LITTLE BIT HAPPY.


WE'RE NOTHING MORE THAN A HANDFUL OF PITIFUL, PUNCH-DRUNK FIGHTERS WHO CAN'T GET OUT OF THE RING.
TARAREBA
TARAREBA
RAREBA



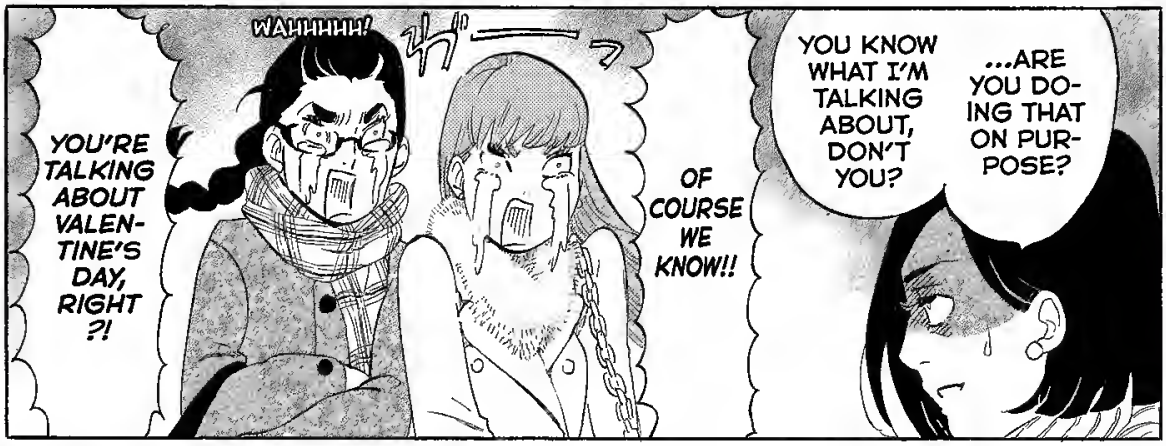
SPECIAL CHAPTER

CHOCOLATE IS ALWAYS SWEET TO ME

*This comic was originally drawn for 2015 Takashimaya Amour du Chocolat!

ピュ〜〜〜
WHOOOOOSH
FOR THE THREE OF US, WHO NEVER CATCH A BREAK AT WORK OR IN LOVE...
REAL-ITY...
...IS NEVER THAT SWEET.
IT'S PROBABLY GONNA SNOW TONIGHT.
MY FEET ARE FREEZ-ING!
AHHH! I SHOULD'VE WORN MY SHEEPSKIN BOOTS!
IT'S SO COLD!
SHIVER
...THIS SEASON IS FULL OF HARD-SHIPS.
HMM?
So what? Doesn't your boy-friend like sweets?
EEK!
EEK!
I went all out! ♡

HEY.
COME TO THINK OF IT...
ISN'T THIS WEEK-END...
HUH? WHAT?
OH, HARI-KUYO?
THE SAP-PORO SNOW FESTI-VAL?
NO, I'M TALKING ABOUT VALEN—
OH, YOU MEAN SOMINSAI?
MINAMIU-ONUMA CITY SNOW FESTI-VAL?

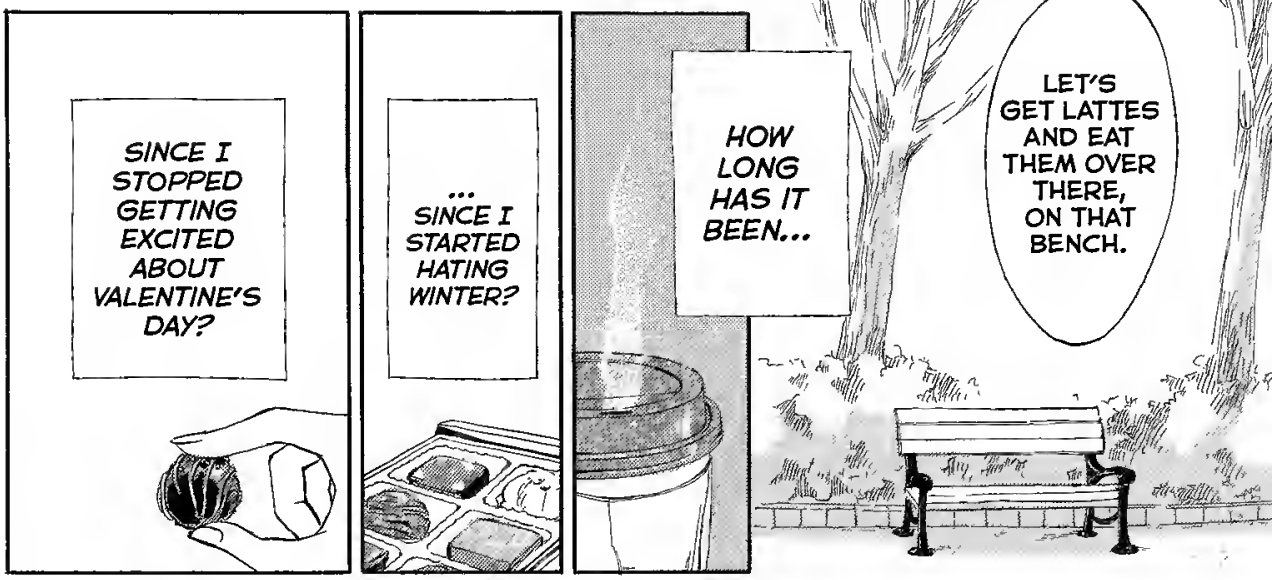

...ARE YOU DO-ING THAT ON PUR-POSE?
YOU KNOW WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT, DON'T YOU?
OF COURSE WE KNOW!!
WAHHHHH!
YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT VALEN-TINE'S DAY, RIGHT?!

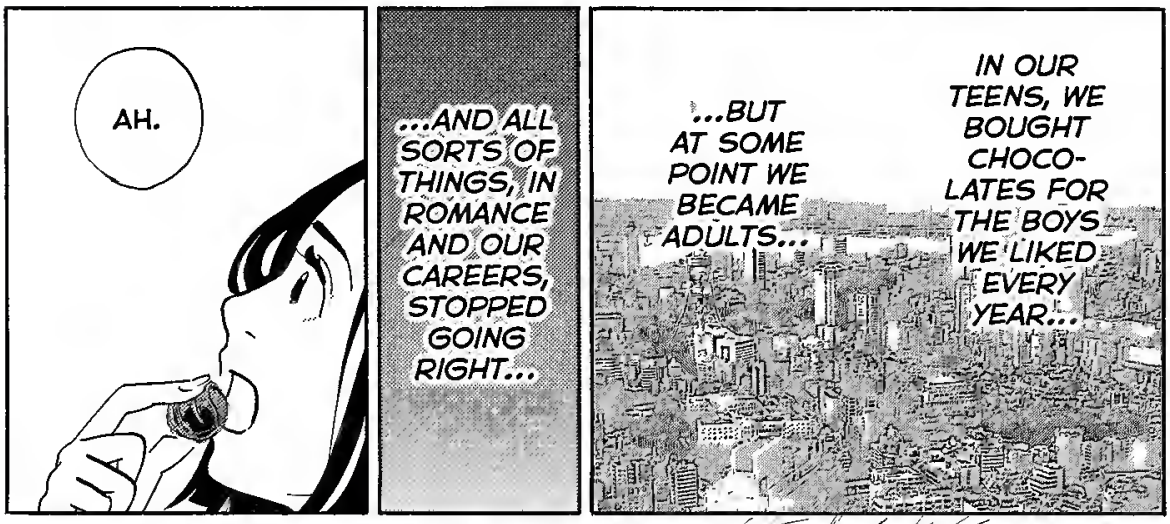
WHAT'S IT GOT TO DO WITH US?!
WE'RE ALL STILL SINGLE!!
YEAH! AND OUR ONLY GUY FRIENDS ARE THE ELDERLY REGULARS AT THE PUB!!
Just give out dried squid!
WAIT ...
SPEAK-ING OF REGU-LARS...
HEY, THAT'S RIGHT. WE DO HAVE THE ONE HUNK.
HUH ?!
CLINT

GETTING CHOCOLATES FROM YOU HAGS DOESN'T MAKE ME HAPPY IN THE LEAST.
HUH?
CHOCO-LATES?
HE MAY BE HAND-SOME, BUT HE'S GOT JUST THE WORST PERSON-ALITY...
HE'S YOUNG AND HE LETS IT GO TO HIS HEAD... HE'S AN ENEMY TO ALL 30-SOME-THING WOMEN!!
NO WAY! I HATE THAT GUY!!
KEY
OCCUPATION: MODEL
I HATE COLD WINTERS ...
WE'LL AT LEAST BE ABLE TO GET A LITTLE TASTE OF THE VALENTINE'S SPIRIT BY GIVING CHOCOLATES TO A HOT, POPULAR MODEL.
NO, NO. EVEN HE WOULDN'T GO THAT FAR.
THAT'S WHAT HE'LL SAY TO US!! I JUST KNOW IT!!
YEAH, THAT SOUNDS NICE. LET'S GET A TASTE, EVEN IF WE HAVE TO FAKE IT.
AMOUR DU CHOCOLAT

...I WAS REMINDED THAT THERE ARE SOME GEMS YOU CAN ONLY FIND DURING THE COLD MONTHS.
BUT FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A WHILE...
OH MAN, THIS ONE THAT'S COVERED IN NUTS LOOKS SOOO GOOD!
LOOK AT THIS ONE! IT'S SO PRETTY! IT LOOKS LIKE A FANCY BROOCH!
WOW. CHOCOLATES THESE DAYS ARE REALLY IMPRES-
W-
SIVE...

...
WE BOUGHT THEM, HUH?
WE BOUGHT THEM ALL RIGHT.
WE BOUGHT THE BAS-TARDS.
HUH?! ALL THAT?! BY YOUR-SELF?!
WELL, THEY ALL LOOK SO GOOD.
I WANT TO TRY EVERY KIND.
We might bump into some good men as we turn this corner!
BUT IT'S OKAY! WE COULD STILL MEET THE MEN OF OUR DREAMS BEFORE THE 14TH.
MAN, THAT'S POSITIVE THINKING!
I THINK I'LL JUST EAT MINE.
I GUESS WE *HAVE* BEEN UNDER A LOT OF STRESS LATELY.
OUR LOVE LIVES AND CAREERS HAVEN'T BEEN WORKING OUT...
SO WE'VE GOTTA EAT SOME SWEETS TO RELIEVE STRESS!
WANNA EAT THEM NOW?
HUH?
T&R COFFEE
3F


SINCE I STOPPED GETTING EXCITED ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY?
... SINCE I STARTED HATING WINTER?
HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN...
LET'S GET LATTES AND EAT THEM OVER THERE, ON THAT BENCH.

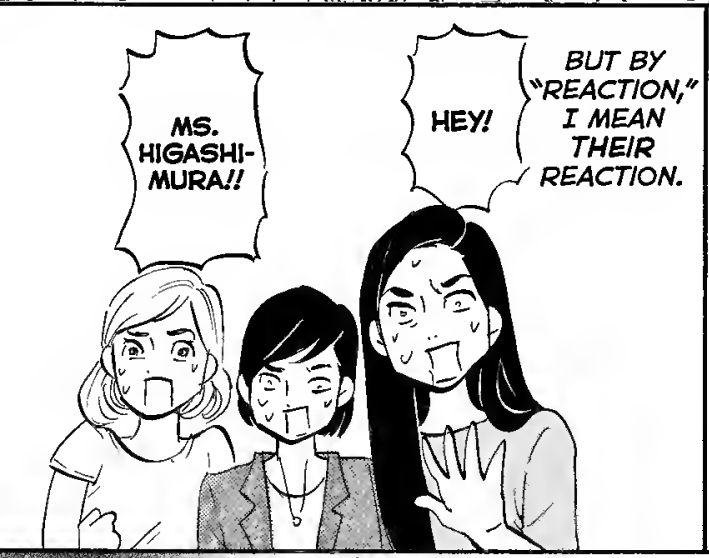

AH.
...AND ALL SORTS OF THINGS, IN ROMANCE AND OUR CAREERS, STOPPED GOING RIGHT...
...BUT AT SOME POINT WE BECAME ADULTS...
IN OUR TEENS, WE BOUGHT CHOCO-LATES FOR THE BOYS WE LIKED EVERY YEAR...

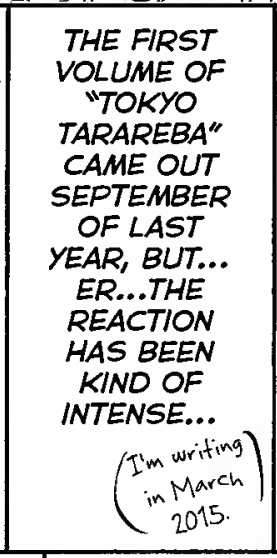
CHOMP
ぱくっ
GAH !!
THIS SUCKS !!
SNOW...

REALITY IS NEVER SWEET.
BUT ... MY LOVE LIFE AND MY CAREER AREN'T GOING WELL...
IT'S COLD OUTSIDE, BUT IN MY MOUTH IT'S HEAVEN ...
MM!
THAT'S GOOD STUFF!
...AT LEAST CHOCOLATE IS ALWAYS SWEET TO ME
OH.
I GUESS YOU HAVE BEEN CAST AWAY BY LIFE.
MY MISTAKE.
WHAT, ARE YOU PLAYING "CAST-AWAY"?
AREN'T YOU A LITTLE OLD TO BE EATING CHOCOLATE OUT IN THE SNOW?
BD
OH
FWIP
BLUUUSH
HEY.

THEN I'LL BUY SOME CHAMPAGNE AND BE READY ON THE 14TH.
...I'D LIKE TO EAT THESE WITH SOME CHAMPAGNE.
YOU KNOW ...
GLINT
HEY.
DRINKER
YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF, KID.
WANT SOME?
YOU SEXY JERK ...
YOU SHOWED UP YET AGAIN, WITH PERFECT TIMING...
TWITCH
HUH?!
THE MAGIC OF VALENTINE'S TURNS OUR BITTER LIVES SWEET FOR JUST ONE DAY.
2月14日(土)
13:01
SMS/MMS
...THAT MAY HAVE GOTTEN TO ME A LITTLE BIT.
OH MAN ...
I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT IT DID SET MY HEART AFLUTTER.
TRY NOT TO EAT THEM ALL BEFORE THEN.
SEE YA.

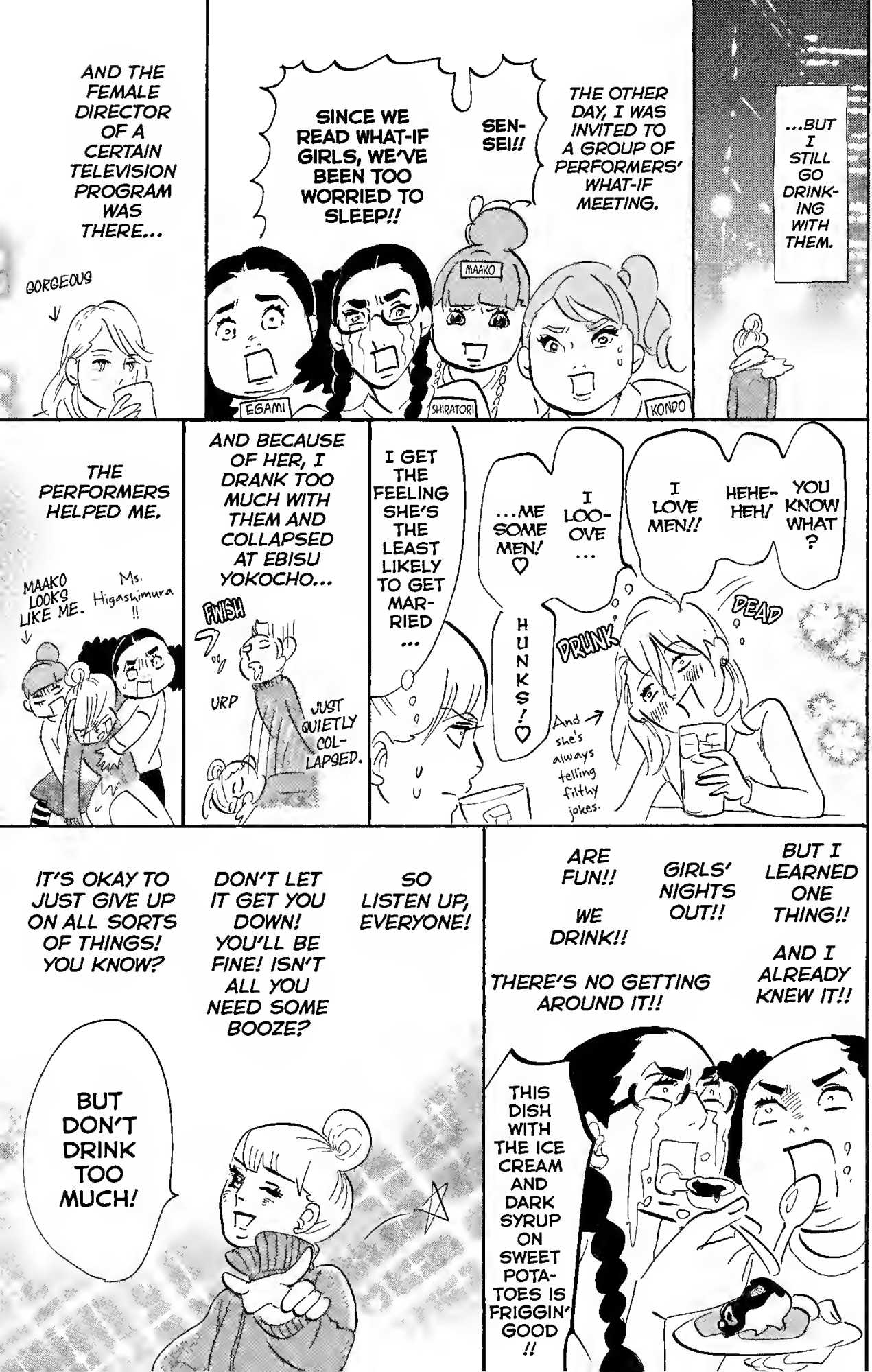
BONUS COMIC ABOUT THE WHAT-IF REACTION 2015

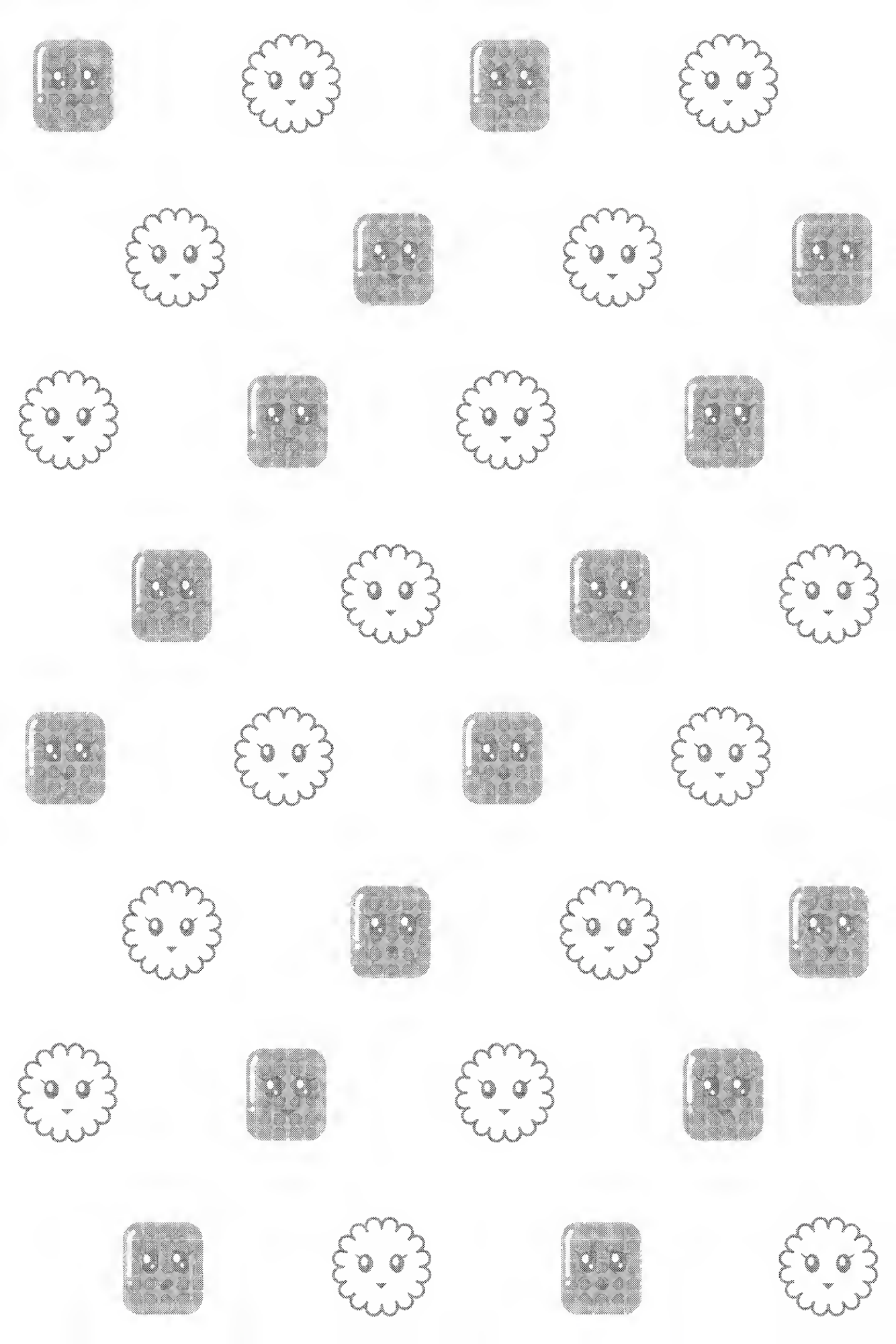



THE FIRST VOLUME OF "TOKYO TARAREBA" CAME OUT SEPTEMBER OF LAST YEAR, BUT... ER...THE REACTION HAS BEEN KIND OF INTENSE...
(I'm writing in March 2015.)

IF THIS IS JUST A COMIC THEN IT'S A HORROR COMIC!! HORROR!!
I AM NOT OKAY!!
IT'S OKAY!! YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY!!
IT'S A COMIC!! IT'S JUST A COMIC!!
WHAP
WHAP

WHAT THE HECK ARE YOU WRITING?!
HEY, MS. HIGASHI-MURA!!
AND THE SINGLE LADIES IN THE EDITING DEPART-MENT AS WELL...
THIS IS AWFUL!!
HEY, WHAT THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU'RE WRIT-ING?!
AND MY SINGLE FRIENDS AS WELL...
AND EVEN MY NEW YEAR'S CARDS...
WHAT-IF GIRLS IS AWFUL. I'M GONNA GET MARRIED THIS YEAR IF IT'S THE LAST THING I DO. 2015
I'VE GOTTA FIND SOMEONE, ANYONE TO MARRY IN THE NEXT YEAR.
I'M A MAN, BUT IT BUMMED ME OUT...
AND AMONG THEM...
I'm telling you that's the wrong way to think!
Ha!
What was that about?
THIS'LL BE TURNED INTO A TV SHOW, RIGHT? YOU'VE GOT YOUR FINGER ON THE PULSE OF THE TIMES!
HEY, THIS IS GOOD.
THE HOUSE-WIFE TEAM PUTS ON A COMPOSED POSTURE.
YUKKO
YARGH!
THE FACT THAT YOU'RE STILL TRYING TO GO OUT ON GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT IS EXACTLY THE PROBLEM WITH YOU PEOPLE!!
SNAP
Ms. Higashimura!
Let's go drinking...
I can go anywhere this week!! I've got all the time in the world!!
I've got nothing on my schedule either.
AND EVERYONE TELLS ME THIS OVER LINE.


AND THE FEMALE DIRECTOR OF A CERTAIN TELEVISION PROGRAM WAS THERE...
GORGEOUS
SINCE WE READ WHAT-IF GIRLS, WE'VE BEEN TOO WORRIED TO SLEEP!!
SEN-SEI!!
THE OTHER DAY, I WAS INVITED TO A GROUP OF PERFORMERS' WHAT-IF MEETING.
...BUT I STILL GO DRINK-ING WITH THEM.
MAAKO
EGAMI
SHIRATORI
KONDO
THE PERFORMERS HELPED ME.
MAAKO LOOKS LIKE ME.
Ms. Higashimura !!
AND BECAUSE OF HER, I DRANK TOO MUCH WITH THEM AND COLLAPSED AT EBISU YOKOCHO...
FNISH
URP
JUST QUIETLY COL-LAPSED.
I GET THE FEELING SHE'S THE LEAST LIKELY TO GET MAR-RIED ...
...ME SOME MEN! ♡
I LOO-OVE ...
HUNKS! ♡
I LOVE MEN!!
HEHE-HEH!
YOU KNOW WHAT ?
DRUNK
DEAD
And she's always telling filthy jokes.
IT'S OKAY TO JUST GIVE UP ON ALL SORTS OF THINGS! YOU KNOW?
DON'T LET IT GET YOU DOWN! YOU'LL BE FINE! ISN'T ALL YOU NEED SOME BOOZE?
SO LISTEN UP, EVERYONE!
BUT DON'T DRINK TOO MUCH!
ARE FUN!!
WE DRINK!!
GIRLS' NIGHTS OUT!!
BUT I LEARNED ONE THING!!
AND I ALREADY KNEW IT!!
THERE'S NO GETTING AROUND IT!!
THIS DISH WITH THE ICE CREAM AND DARK SYRUP ON SWEET POTA-TOES IS FRIGGIN' GOOD !!



TOKYO TARAREBA GIRLS VOLUME 2
TRANSLATION NOTES

ABOUT THE NAME: "TARAREBA" MEANS "WHAT-IF," LIKE THE "WHAT-IF" STORIES YOU TELL YOURSELF ABOUT WHAT *COULD* BE OR *COULD HAVE* BEEN.

P029

FROM A FAMOUS POP SONG BY KANA NISHINO, WHO DEBUTED IN 2008.

P030

OSUGI IS A FAMOUS GAY PERFORMER AND MOVIE CRITIC WHO ALSO PERFORMS WITH HIS TWIN BROTHER, PEECO. BOTH ARE KNOWN FOR BEING RATHER BLUNT, AS THE QUOTE SUGGESTS.

DON'T YOU REMEMBER HOW MR. OSUGI USED TO SAY MEN IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY TREAT WOMEN LIKE DISPOSABLE TISSUES?
WELL, I MEAN, COME ON...

P142

LYRICS FROM THE 1993 SINGLE "ROAD" BY THE ROCK BAND THE TRA-BRYU, WHICH DEBUTED IN 1982, BUT IS STILL AROUND TODAY.

P162: HARI-KUYO

"THE FESTIVAL OF BROKEN NEEDLES", WHERE NEEDLES BROKEN IN THE PAST YEAR ARE LAID TO REST AT SHRINES.

P162: SAPPORO SNOW FESTIVAL

A "NAKED FESTIVAL" HELD IN IWATE DURING WINTER. MEN STRIP DOWN, SPLASH THEMSELVES WITH WATER, AND CLIMB THE LOCAL MOUNTAIN. DESPITE THE NAME, MANY PARTICIPANTS WEAR A FUNDOSHI LOINCLOTH.

P162: MINAMIUONUMA CITY SNOW FESTIVAL

ANOTHER ANNUAL EVENT AT WHICH THE PEOPLE ENJOY PLAYING IN THE SNOW.

Tokyo Tarareba Girls 2

KODANSHA COMICS Digital Edition

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Translation by Steven LeCroy
Lettering by Rina Mapa
Editing by Sarah Tilson
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